

# WIRE

JAZZ AND  
NEW MUSIC

Issue 85 march 1991 \$4.00 £1.95

**Evan Parker and Louis Moholo**

*back in the underground*

**Steve Reich**  
*all systems go*

**Charlie Parker**  
*at last – the Benedetti tapes!*

**Buster Williams**

**Jonathan Goe**

- *Jazz Awards – all the winners*
- *Improv – the never-ending crisis*



Illustration: Mike Sharp



**10-24 MARCH 1991**

Information and  
FREE mailing list  
071 860 5866

CAMDEN ARTS & ENTERTAINMENTS  
in Association with Serious Productions  
limited

# CAMDEN JAZZ festival

## CAMDEN PARKWAY CINEMA

MARCH  
**10**

Silent comedy films - Laurel & Hardy,  
Buster Keaton etc. with live music from  
BILLY JENKINS & VOICE OF GOD  
COLLECTIVE

## TOWN & COUNTRY CLUB

MARCH  
**24**

GEORGE RUSSELL'S LIVING TIME  
ORCHESTRA with ANDY SHEPPARD,  
IAN CARR, CHRIS BISCOE plus  
CASSANDRA WILSON QUARTET &  
JULIAN JOSEPH

## SHAW THEATRE

MARCH  
**20**

JAZZ WARRIORS with CRAIG HARRIS  
plus TONY REMY's LATERAL  
THINKING

MARCH  
**21 & 22**

LONDON JAZZ COMPOSERS  
ORCHESTRA with BARRY GUY,  
GEORGE LEWIS & IRENE SCHWEIZER

Plus seven nights at the Jazz Café:

DANNY THOMPSON (19), BEN E KING (20),

JIMMY GIUFFRÉ/PAUL BLEY/STEVE SWALLOW (21),

DEWEY REDMAN QUINTET (22 & 23)



**TICKETS** from usual agents & Shaw Theatre Box Office 071 388 1394

wire

issue 85

march 1991

£1.95

\$4.00

Cover

*Lean and Low*

*put their*

*heads together.*

*Photo by Caryl Jay.*

- |                        |    |   |
|------------------------|----|---|
| <b>Now's The Time</b>  | 4  | <i>All news plus dates to make</i>            |
| <b>The Jazz Awards</b> | 9  | <i>Full results and report</i>                |
| <b>Jonathan Gee</b>    | 12 | <i>Laura Connolly and the most promising</i>  |
| <b>Buster Williams</b> | 14 | <i>Karen Bennett meets the bass boys</i>      |
| <b>Livewire</b>        | 18 | <i>Piano Forty, Some Other Country, more</i>  |
| <b>Steve Reich</b>     | 22 | <i>Jonathan Coe is unendingly composed</i>    |
| <b>Improvisation</b>   | 24 | <i>Any gigs, gnv? Barry Witherden wonders</i> |
| <b>Evan Parker</b>     | 26 | <i>In deep country with Graham Lock</i>       |
| <b>Louis Moholo</b>    | 28 | <i>In another country with Richard Scott</i>  |
| <b>Subscribe!</b>      | 29 | <i>Another tempting offer</i>                 |
| <b>Books</b>           | 40 | <i>Shvarecky and Ellington in print</i>       |
| <b>The Charts</b>      | 42 | <i>This month's league ladders</i>            |
| <b>Hardwire</b>        | 44 | <i>Technicals for technos</i>                 |
| <b>Soundcheck</b>      | 46 | <i>Enough reviews for anybody</i>             |
| <b>The Write Place</b> | 48 | <i>Where you state your stuff</i>             |

wire

A member of the Namura Group

ISSN 0952-6686

world headquarters: Units G & H, 115 Cleveland Street, London W1P 3PN, England. Telephone: 071-580 7522. Fax: 071-523 6905.

• Editor/Publisher **Richard Cook** • Deputy Editor **Graham Lock** • Art Director **Brooke Auchincloss-Foreman** • Contributing Editor **Mark Sinker** •  
• Administration Manager **Adele Yaron** • Advertising Manager **Roger Thomas** • Founder **Anthony Wood** •

Promotion Consultants: MSP Public Relations, Namura Public Relations. Typesetting by MC Typeset Ltd, Gillingham. Printing by Garrett Dickinson Print Limited, Rotherham and London.  
Wire is distributed in the UK by AGB Inpress, Chester Court, 22-26 Farringdon Lane, London EC2A 3AA.

contributors: Mike Asheton, Richard Barrett, Karen Bennett, Jonathan Coe, Jack Cooks, Tim Cohen, Mike Fob, John Foulds, Martin Guggins, Paul Gundry, Andy Hamilton, Tony Herrington, David Iler, Nick Kimberley, Biko Koff, Russell Lock, Steve Lahr, Vanessa Lyons, Howard Mandel, Kerry Matthews, Bruce Martin, Stuart Nicholson, Chris Parker, Brian Pringle, Roland Romanus, Richard Scott, Sue Stewart, Ben Watson, Philip Watson, Val Walters, Barry Witherden, Mike Zuma

The views expressed in WIRE are those of the respective contributors and are not necessarily shared by the magazine or its staff. WIRE assumes no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts, photographs and illustrations. Send at your own risk. Copyright here and abroad is held by the publisher or by freelance contributors. Unauthorized reproduction of any item is very, very wrong.

# BROTHERHOOD BREATHES AGAIN

THIS MONTH'S cover stars Louis Moholo and Evan Parker, together with Ogun label boss Hazel Miller, are planning a special tribute to South African musicians Johnny Dyani, Mongezi Feza, Chris McGregor, Harry Miller and Dudu Pukwana to commemorate their enormous contributions to the UK jazz scene. The ultimate aim is to establish a scholarship fund to help young South African musicians come to London, and the project will begin with a London concert and a studio recording, both tentatively planned for May and both featuring many of the people who played in the early Brotherhood Of Breath line-ups. Personnel has still to be finalised, but the plan is for a full 18-piece big band plus additional instrumentation where required. Repertoire will include tunes by all five dedicatees, with new arrangements by Nick Evans, Dave Holland, Keith Tippett, Stan Tracey, Mike Westbrook, Kenny Wheeler and others. Watch this space for further details.

# VOICE OF GOD MEETS VOICE OF WILSON

CASSANDRA WILSON, the Jimmy Giuffrè/Paul Bley/Steve Swallow trio, James Blood Ulmer, George Russell, Dewey Redman and the LJCO with guest artists George Lewis and Irene Schweizer are now confirmed for this year's Camden Jazz Festival, which runs from 10-24 March in various North London venues. Most major concerts will take place in the Jazz Cafe, the Shaw Theatre or the Town & Coun-

try Club. The Jazz Cafe hosts the James Blood Ulmer Trio (w/Ronald Shannon Jackson and Jamaaladeen Tacuma) plus Pinski Zoo (17, 18); the Sidel Endresen group (w/Django Bates) plus Danny Thompson's Whatever (19); the Jimmy Giuffrè/Paul Bley/Steve Swallow trio (21); Dewey Redman Qnt plus Lateral Thinking (22, 23). Concerts at the Shaw Theatre include the Jazz Warriors w/Craig Harris plus Lateral Thinking (20); London Jazz Composers Orchestra w/George Lewis and Irene Schweizer (21, 22); and the festival closes on 24 March at the Town & Country Club with Cassandra Wilson plus the George Russell Living Time Orchestra (w/Andy Sheppard). Concert details from 071 439 0807 or relevant box offices. Finally, to begin the festival with a bang (and several other kinds of loud noise), Billy Jenkins & The Voice Of God Collective will improvise to silent films at the Camden Parkway Cinema (10 March).

# FJORD FIESTA

NORWEGIAN SINGER Sidel Endresen follows up her debut release on ECM with a brief UK tour this month. Accompanied by Django Bates (piano), Nils Petter Molvær (trumpet) and Jon Christensen (percussion), she visits Manchester Band On The Wall (14 March); Ambleside Zefirelli (15); Birmingham Midlands Arts Centre (17); London Jazz Cafe (19).

TRANE RE-ROUTED CHANNEL 4 are to reschedule the remaining episodes of their *Jazz On A Winter's*

Night series, which has been displaced by coverage of the Gulf War. The Channel 4 press office assures us that the rest of the series, including the much-anticipated *The Coltrane Legacy* which features all known TV footage of John Coltrane, will be shown "soon", but at present no firm date has been announced.

Meanwhile, Radio 3 jazz coverage in March includes live music from Carla Bley and Oregon. The Very Big Carla Bley Band concert will be broadcast on 11 March (10pm), the Oregon on 25 (also 10pm, and introduced by R D Cook).

# COMPUTER HOOTER & THE IMPROVISE GUYS

BASSMAN BARRY Guy takes his London Jazz Composers Orchestra on a rare, three-date outing this month courtesy of Jazz Services. The band, featuring more than a dozen of Britain's finest improvisers, play London Shaw Theatre (21, 22 March); Cambridge Corn Exchange (24). Special guests with the LJCO for these gigs will be US trombonist/computer virtuoso George Lewis and celebrated Swiss pianist Irene Schweizer.

# GET INTO THE MICRO'

TROMBONIST ASHLEY Slater leads his jazz-funksters Microgroove on some UK dates in March and April. The 'Groove will be jumping at London Bass Clef (7 March); London George Robey (8); London Subterranea (26); Huddersfield Kirkkles Centre (27); Stoke On Trent Freetown Club (28); Blackpool venue tbc (29);

Glasgow Sun Club (30); Newcastle Riverside tbc (4 April); Manchester Band On The Wall (6). Details from 0306 889547.

# BATHOGRAD ALLTSARS

PIANIST SERGEY Kuryokhin and a special Anglo-Georgian big band concert bring a Russian flavour to this year's Bath Festival, which takes place from 24 May to 9 June. The Kuryokhin concert is part of a UK solo tour planned for late May, while the big band concert is part of a larger project that will take Mujician (Paul Dunmall, Tony Marsh, Paul Rogers and Keith Tippett) to the Soviet Union for two weeks to work with a dozen or so Georgian musicians. They all then come to the UK for concerts at Bath and elsewhere, returning to Georgia for further concerts at the Tbilisi Jazz Festival in late June.

Other artists confirmed for Bath include the Dave Holland Qt (w/Steve Coleman), 29th St Saxophone Qt, Abdullah Ibrahim, the Andy Sheppard big band, Carol Kidd and the Kronos String Qt. More details next month or, for free brochure, ring 0225 463362/466411.

# RADIO GAGA!

JAZZ FM, the UK's only full-time jazz radio station, has made more than a third of its staff redundant after October-December 1990 Jicra figures suggested the station had lost nearly 50% of its listeners in that three-month period. The staff reductions, from 40 to 24 personnel, were blamed by Jazz FM MD John Bradford on the

recession and a continuing squeeze on advertising revenue; though other sources at the station apparently blamed "esoteric" programming. Senior producer Malcolm Laycock has now been appointed head of programming and the likelihood is he will diversify the station's output, possibly lessening its core-jazz content.

Meanwhile, the status of Jazz FM director and DJ Gilles Peterson remains unclear. Peterson's programme was taken off the air after the UK Radio Authority had received complaints about his anti-war statements on a 12 January broadcast. As we went to press, Jazz FM were unable to confirm whether Peterson had been sacked or temporarily suspended, although both parties have acknowledged a history of previous disputes over musical policy.

#### ON TOUR:

##### JONES, REBELLO

SAXOPHONIST ED Jones takes his quartet on a UK tour this month. The group – Geoff Williams (piano), Wayne Batchelor (bass), Brian Abrahams (drums) – will visit Yeovil Quicksilver Mail (3 March); Cardiff Four Bars Inn (7); Newcastle Live Theatre (10); Southampton University John Arlott Room (12); Colchester Art Centre (14); Stockton Dovecot Arts Centre (15); Plymouth Academy (24). Punctuating these dates are several lunchtime concerts at London's Jazz Cafe (2, 9, 16, 23, 30). Details from 071 281 6811.

Pianist Jason Rebello visits Northern Ireland this month, courtesy of the Arts Council, with a quintet that features



The Canadian ladies sing this song! Cassandra Wilson comes to North London's jazz festival. Photo by Andrew Pottery

saxman Dave O'Higgins and guitarist Tony Remy. Dates are Armagh Chardmont Arms Hotel (5 March); Belfast Errigle Inn (6); Enniskillen Ardhowen Theatre (7); Portlaoise Edgewater Hotel (8); Derry Britannia Hotel (9). Details from 0252 381591 ext 272.

##### WIZARDS FOR OZ

JOHN SURMAN, Stan Tracey and Mike Westbrook are among the artists playing at a special 'Tribute To Mike Osborne' concert which will take place at London's 100 Club on 30 April. Surman and Alan Skidmore will perform a piece in memory of their SOS trio with altoist Osborne, whose illness has long kept out of the music scene; they will

then be joined by Paul Rogers and Louis Moholo for a quartet set. Other music will come from Tracey's Octet and a nine-piece Westbrook band. Details from 071 636 0933.

##### GIANT STEP

THE MODERN Jazz Quartet, Roadside Picnic, Mervyn Africa, Tommy Smith and Scott Hamilton are among the artists appearing at the first-ever Giant Hertfordshire Jazz Festival, which takes place from 20 April to 12 May in nearly 30 venues around the county. As well as dozens of concerts, the festival will include workshops, films, local radio broadcasts and exhibitions – including a collection of photos of contemporary jazz

artists compiled by *Wire* (at Hemel Hempstead Old Town Hall Arts Centre, 15 April–4 May). Details from 0992 556614 or 081 438 7095.

##### ETUDE, BRUTE!

HARMOLOUDNIKS Pinski Zoo and Debussy fan Jason Rebello headline a free Easter jazz festival in the foyers of London's Barbican Centre from 29 March–1 April. The Zoo and Rebello appear on 29 March, followed by Alan Skidmore (30); New Orleans Jazz (31); Humphrey Lyttelton (1 April). Details from 071 638 8891.

##### BIG HORNS, MANY HATS

REEDSMAN ANTHONY Braxton brings his quartet to London for three concerts in early April as part of a European tour. The group – Marilyn Crispell (piano), Mark Dresser (bass), Gerry Hemingway (percussion) – will play London's Jazz Cafe from 1–3 April. Braxton hopes to bring his contrabass instruments – sax and clarinet – to the London dates and Har Art are planning to record all three nights.

##### TEAPOT FOR TWO

SAXIST JON Lloyd and violinist Phil Wachsmann embark on an Arts Council Improvised Music tour in March and April with concerts at Manchester Unicorn Hotel (26 March), Southampton The Flying Teapot (11 April); London Clapham The Sun (24). Expect more April gigs to be added in Brighton and Norwich. Details from 071 326 1378.



in association with

**PURDEY'S**

château

MORE HYGIENE, LESS BLENDS

\* denotes that other concerts at this venue are listed in the news section, pp 4-5. Please note that the deadline for April listings is 1 March.

#### Aberdeen City Hall

(0224 641122)

Balloon Man

Barnet Old Ball Arts Centre

(081 449 0948)

Leigh Etherington Qnt

Manu Ventura

Barrowford (nr Burnley)

Cave Hall (051 327 4908)

Norma Winstone Qnt

Bath Mela Club (0225 333423)

Tommy Chase

Berkhamstead Civic Centre

(0442 873264)

Brian Priestley Special

Septet

Birmingham Adrian Beale Hall

(021 236 3889)

Willem Breuker

Kollektief

Bracknell South Hall Park

(0344 484123)

Willem Breuker

Kollektief

Brentwood Monkey's Club

(0277 218897)

Gary Boyle

Sax Appeal

Evidence

Brighton Gardner Arts Centre

(0273 686861)

Toomay Smith Group

Bristol Albert Inn

(0272 661966)

Bob Jones/Paul Rogers

Qnt

Keith Tippett/Eltos

Dean

Ben Waghom Qnt

Bishop Cleeve (0272 423310)

Andy Hague Qnt

John Burgess Trio

Stratus

Hipe Centre (0272 213271)

John Stevens

Theatre Royal (0272 250250)

Willem Breuker

Kollektief

Watershed Arts Centre

(0272 253843)

John Burgess Trio

Cambridge (Flammar)

(0223 62550)

Billy Jenkins & VOGC

Don Weller Qnt

Balloon Man

Evidence

January (0223 214600)

Desperately Seeking

Fusion

Cardiff Four Bars Inn

(0222 340591)\*

Heavy Qt

Lee Goodall Qt

Jazz News

Strange Fruits

Nick Wilkinson Qt

Crawley Heath Centre

(0293 553636)

Steve Berry Trio

Edinburgh The Merlin

(041 552 3223)

Balloon Man

Kollektief

Exeter Arts Centre

(0392 219741)

Peter Fairclough Group

Barrowfield Theatre (0392 421111)

Willem Breuker

Kollektief

Glasgow Heavy Wind Hall

(041 552 3223)

Balloon Man

Hemel Hempstead Blue Note

(0462 242827)

Sax Appeal

Pigs Head Sons

Lancaster venue etc

(041 552 3223)

British Summertime

Ends

Leeds Destination Out

(041 552 3223)

American Express

Gallery All Stars

The Jazz Millenium

Rich Underhill (tbc)

Trade Club (0532 742486)

Willem Breuker

Kollektief

24 Leicester Haymarket

(0533 539797)

Willem Breuker

21 Kollektief

Luton 33 Arts Centre

(0582 429584)

1 John Law Qt

8 Manchester Band On The Wall

15 (061 832 6623)\*

22 Tony Levin Trio

7 Dewey Redman Sextet

Kevin Davy's D-Semble

4 Pulse X 4

RNCM (061 273 4504)

Willem Breuker

1 Kollektief

2 Newcastle-upon-Tyne Corner

14 House (091 265 9602)

15 Harry Sweets' Edison

16 Law Theatre (091 261 2694)\*

Lee Twoomey Orchestra

(lunchtime)

8 Oxford Corpus Christi Music Room

Steve Kershaw Qt

Jericho Tavern (0865 54502)

7 Pete McPhail Trio

26 Sheldonian Theatre (0865 364056)

Willem Breuker

2 Kollektief

2 Poole Arts Centre

(0202 685222)\*

25 Don Weller

Sevenoaks Frog & Bucket

(073275 219)

8 Hard Lines (lunchtime) 10, 24

Hard Lines (evening) 13, 27

Sheffield Hallamshire Hall

(041 552 3223)

28 Modum Qt

Leeds Hall (0742 754500)

Jonathan Gee Trio

(lunchtime)

9 Julian Joseph Qt

Sherborne Jazz Club

(0935 812074)

4 Andy Hague Qnt

13 Southampton University John

Arts Room (041 552 3223)\*

27 Don Weller Qt

Heavy Qt

John Law Qt

15 Stamford Arts Centre

(0780 63203)

Chris Buscoe Qt

Wakefield Sports Club

(041 552 3223)

Jonathan Gee Trio

Wavendon The Stable

(0908 383928)

22 Mervyn Africa

7 LONDON

2 Bass Clef N1 (071 729 2476)\*

Vibes Special

5 Brothers, Amaburho

Roadside Picnic

20 Stan Tracey/Art Themen 12, 13

Bhika Macleau Qt

Coup D'Etat

12 Blow The Fuse (King's Head)

N1 (071 254 8935)

Dangerous Designs

3 Jan Posnford Trio

2 Diorama W1 (071 402 7375)

7 Quilombo Exponance

Frouds Bar WC7

(041 552 3223)

Bunchers Of Distinction

(admission free)

22 Jazz Cafe NW1

(see News)

Noel McCall's Concert

21 John Sorman Qt

Freddie Hubbard Qnt

Don Cherry & Multi

Kulti

11-16 Camden Jazz Festival

17-23 Dean, Paul Rogers,

Larry Coryell

24, 25 Monty Alexander Trio

Old Tiger's Head SE13

(041 552 3223)

10 Brian Priestley Qt w/Art

12 Themen

183 Hammersmith Road W6

(071 615 3759)

4 Todd, Guy, Tomlinson,

Thomas, Turner, Coshill,

Wachmann, Minton,

5 Russell (free admission)

10 QEH SE1 (071 938 8800)

19 Willem Breuker

21 Kollektief

Red Eye SE1 (081 318 0416)

1 Red Lines

22 Had Rose Club N7

(041 552 3223)

8 Butcher, Durrant,

Russell, Mallart

17 Ronnie Scott's Club W1

(071 439 0747)

Roy Ayres Sextet

4-23 Shaw Theatre NW1

(041 552 3223)

Zila, Shukha, Progress,

Uthingo, Manharan

5 The Sun (Clapham) SW9\*

(041 552 3223)

19 Jon Lloyd, Paul Rogers,

21 Mark Sanders

The Swan W6

(041 552 3223)

5 Louis Moholo Trio

24 Nancy, Budyak

Tenor Clef N1 (071 729 2476)

16 Lol Coshill/Dave Green

19-24 Herb Ellis/Peter Ild

Murray Wilson

28-30 Vortex N16 (071 254 6316)\*

17 Derek Bailey

Derek Bailey, Vanessa

MacKness, John Butcher,

Phil Wachsmann

5 Derek Bailey, Thebe

4 Lipere, Louis Moholo

6 Mervyn Africa Qt

7 Alan Skidmore Qt

9 Keith Tippett, Elton

Dean, Paul Rogers,

Louis Moholo

13 Ian Shaw Band

14 Carol Grimes Band

15 Spirit Level

Peter King Qt

22 Evidance

23 Howard Riley, Manu

Casaroni, Tony Marsh

27 Watermans Arts Centre

Brentford (081 847 5631)

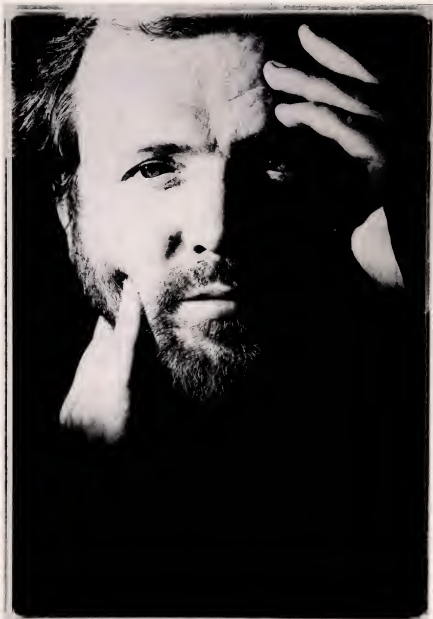
Cleveland Watkins

22 Willesden Green Library

Centre NW10 (081 431 4873)

Carol Grimes Band

6 Bammie Rose Qt



*Living in the shack Breuker built? Willem and his Kollektief go on a CMN tour to a venue near you this month. Photo by Mark Doucet*

# Linn know that the most important part of any Hi Fi is the music...

## DAVID NEWTON: 'VICTIM OF CIRCUMSTANCE'

A Piano Trio Album

(LP AKH013, CD AK0013, MC AKC013)

*"A masterly trio set which unveils the range and depth of Newton's creative gift for both melody and constantly fertile harmonic invention, full of unexpected, dazzlingly beautiful twists and nuances."*

KENNY MATHIESON, SCOTLAND ON SUNDAY.

## MARTIN TAYLOR: 'DON'T FRET'

A Guitar Quartet Album

(LP AKH014, CD AK0014, MC AKC014)

*"His invention during the solos mark him as a major player... Taylor proved that even in his early thirties he is one of the most stately Jazz guitarists on the European scene."*

THE GUARDIAN'S BOB FLYNN ON THE 'DON'T FRET' LAUNCH CONCERT.

Linn have also recorded with Carol Kidd, voted 'Best Vocalist' in the British International Jazz Awards 90/91.

## 'THE NIGHT WE CALLED IT A DAY'

(LP AKH007, CD AKHC0007, MC AKHCS007)

## 'NICE WORK'

(LP AKH008, CD AKHC0008, MC AKCS008)

## 'ALL MY TOMORROWS'

(LP AKH005, CD AKC0005, MC AKHCS005)

## 'CAROL KIDD'

(LP AKH003, CD AKHC0003, MC AKHCS003)

Distribution: New Note (0689) 877884

Dealer's contact: Pinnacle (0689) 873144



For more information on Linn, complete the coupon and return to: Linn Products Limited, Floors Road, Waterfoot, Eaglesham, Glasgow G7B 0EP.  
Tel. (041) 644 5111

**LINN**



☐ HI FI ☐ RECORDS ☐ MAILING LIST

NAME

ADDRESS

TEL

WIRE



# British International Jazz Awards 1990-1991

*Our Awards went international for the first time in January - and for the fifth year*

*Wire readers did us proud, sending in votes by the sackload in the seven major*

*categories of Award. To all of you who voted - plus the many Guardian readers*

*who also cast the runes - thanks!*

*Cannes do/  
Andy Sheppard;  
Piniki Zoo (right)  
Photos by  
David Redfern*



## the full results

**Best Instrumentalist:** *Jason Rebells*

**Best Vocalist:** *Carol Kidd*

**Best Composer:** *Django Bates*

**Best Band (Small Group):** *Piniki Zoo*

**Best Band (Big Band):** *Andy Sheppard's Soft On The Inside*

**Best Album:** *'A Waltz For Grace', Steve Williamson*

**Most Promising Newcomer:** *Jonathan Gee*

**Guardian Milestones Award, for jazz achievement:** *Carla Bley*

**Wire/Elephant Award, services to jazz:** *Jon Dabner*

**MIDEM Award for Best International Artist:** *Louis Sluvis*

*Cannes de too? International artist Louis Schlavis (opposite right);*

*Best Newcomer Jonathan Gee receives his award*

*from French pianist Michel D'Alberio (bottom right)*

*Both photos by Yves Coustou*

*And Best Vocalist Carol Kidd*

*(bottom left) Photo by David Redfern*





*More Canned do? Drummer Daniel Humair,*

*with guest artists The Henri Texier Trio (top);*

*Best Composer Django Bates (bottom). Photo by Yves Courailhon*



### awards commentary:

Andy Sheppard was knocked off the top spot in the best instrumentalist category after two consecutive victories; in his place, the meteoric Mr Rebello, although voting proved to be a close-run thing between those two and Steve Williamson; Andy had to be content with the Big Band Award, where he strolled away from the competition, and Steve had a hands-down victory in the Best Album section. Django Bates collected his second Best Composer trophy (the first was in 1987), while the Pinskis won a decisive victory in the Small Group category for the first time. Carol Kidd, who's been nearly-there in the last two years, finally pulled clear of the singers' pack this time, and the surprise leader in the Newcomer category proved to be the eminently-deserving Jonathan Gee.

In the special categories, Carla Bley took the Milestones Award, which initially went to George Russell last year, proving that composers are always the cats to respect; Jazz Cafe boss Jon Dabner was recognised as a force for positive ends in the music with the Services To Jazz Award; and MIDEM chose France's favourite Louis Slavis in the International Category.

A suitably festive evening was had by all at The Martinez Hotel in Cannes on the night of 21 January. We heard a delightful set by the re-formed trio of Francois Jeanneau, Henri Texier and Daniel Humair; Louis Slavis sparkled with an impromptu seven-minute bass-clarinet solo; Carol Kidd swept through a brief set of standards; and Andy Sheppard's In Co-Motion quintet made a stunning international debut.

Our special thanks to the many distinguished guests who presented this year's Awards; to compere Paul Thompson; and to our magnificent sponsors, without whom, etc! \*

*The Awards are sponsored by*



## big time for blah blah

Pianist Jonathan Gee won this year's *Wire* Best Newcomer Award

following his *Blah Blah Blah* cassette and numerous

sideman appearances. Now he looks forward to fame, fortune and . . . doing nothing.

Words by Laura Connolly

Photo by Mel Yates

JONATHAN GEE'S diminutive figure, as he sits, face in hands, surrounded by the genial clatter of the Royal Festival Hall, belies his stature as a musician. Recent winner of the *Wire*'s Best Newcomer award, his emergence on the jazz scene has not been as meteoric as the award might suggest.

A classical training on the piano from the ages of five to nine years was abandoned when he dabbled in rock music as a teenager, singing and playing electric guitar "like everybody did". It was only when he reached university that he returned to the piano, and jazz became an all-consuming habit. "Becoming a jazz musician was an easy way to combine 'therapy' with my hobby," he states candidly.

Moving back to London from Sheffield, not only to return to his friends, but to seek the musicians and the music, he enrolled at the Guildhall School Of Music. The stay, however, was short-lived. "I went for a week and left," he says angrily. "I didn't think the teaching was any good." In fact the subject provoked a lengthy attack upon the jazz education establishment, its alleged ignorance and bias. "A lot of teachers hide behind their authority and aren't actually experts in what they're teaching. They've just learnt different little aspects of it. Nobody should be taught that this is jazz harmony and this is classical harmony, it's just bollocks."

He saves his most scathing comments for the British and European jazz scene. A community which he sees as healthy and creative nevertheless falls by the wayside in comparison with America. "If you look at the standard of Herbie Hancock and Keith Jarrett, we're nowhere over here. The great Americans, their time concepts and stuff, people in Britain just haven't got near that yet. I think the standard of jazz playing in Britain and London is nowhere as high as people seem to think it is."

THIS REPUTEDLY low standard, however, does not seem to have deterred either Gee or the many other musicians who have asked him to play with them. Wayne Batchelor, Bobby Wellins, Iain Ballamy, Eddie Parker, Dylan Fowler's

Frevo and numerous others have gigged with him. He's a busy man.

Whilst being a sideman, he is still keen to pursue his own ideas. With one cassette recording under his belt – *Blah Blah Blah Etc Etc*, featuring Thad Kelly on bass and Pete Fairclough on drums – he is planning an album with his latest line-up, Wayne Batchelor on bass and Winston Clifford on drums. With this new group and seven new compositions he was all set to start a February/March tour.

The criticism of *Blah Blah Blah Etc Etc* – that his playing is heavily influenced by Keith Jarrett (he even scats with a similar off-pitch whine in places) – he contemplates and denies. "I disagree in a way," he says slowly. "A pianist will play in a certain direction depending on who the rhythm section is and where the rhythm is. The way other people played on that tape, as well as my tunes, sort of pushed it in that direction. I don't even like a lot of Keith Jarrett anyway."

The recording is now over two years old and Gee's playing has developed considerably since then. His accompaniment to Bobby Wellins, on an empty night at Hoxton's Tenor Clef, illuminated his terse phrasing and rhapsodic lines – which, together with his ability to embellish an idea with knife-like clarity in between sensitive, brush-stroke chords, show his popularity is well-founded.

Success, so far, is not something that has affected him unduly. In fact, his hectic rehearsal schedule, he confesses, he would gladly substitute for endless salaried days of doing nothing. But whilst he remains a musician he maintains an explorative yet typically down-to-earth frame of mind. Although he confesses that he would love to play with Stevie Wonder "and be part of that vibe", his ambitions are more realistic.

"I like to put myself in musical situations which have got a natural momentum and which I quite like. I'll go and play with musicians that I want to play with, but for my own thing – I like playing trio gigs because it gives me a chance to play the melody."



# bass, how low can you go?

Few can play so high or low as Buster Williams, one of New York's most in-

demand bassmen, whose list of gold-star credits includes gigs with Miles Davis,

Herbie Hancock, Betty Carter and Sarah Vaughan. Karen Bennett gets the

lowdown on how the high and mighty rehearse. Photo by Andrew Potthecary.

WHEN BUSTER Williams plays, he often looks down at the bass's stringboard as if he is curious, in a bemused sort of way, about what the instrument has to say. "Really?" Buster seems to respond. Then, "I see"; followed by a little reflective slide before they put their heads together again. Or perhaps he is leaning close to hear the celestial sound of the A-string, which sold him on this particular Hawks bass. "It was like all of the gods getting together and humming," Buster says. Either way, the *deus ex machina* conceit is not at all far-fetched when one considers that, professionally, Buster Williams has led a charmed life.

As Buster tells it, he was getting ready to go to the movies with his girlfriend one evening in 1960 when he got a call from his father, Charles Anthony Williams, Sr. Someone was needed to fill in for bassist Nelson Boyd on a Gene Ammons/Sonny Stitt date that very night in Philadelphia. The elder Williams was unavailable, and having groomed his 17-year-old son to a state of readiness for just such an occasion, turned the gig over to him. Buster arrived early and introduced himself. He recalls the conversation with Stitt:

"Are you gonna play the gig?"

Buster: "I'm gonna do my best."

This question was repeated twice before Buster realized that "do my best" was not the politically-correct answer, and mustered an emphatic "yes".

At the end of the night, Ammons asked him to join the band, and the next day they went on the road. When Buster and company got stranded by Ammons after two weeks in Kansas City, the bassist was prepared. "My father had given me a Bible, and he told me to keep my bus fare in the Bible at all times."

When he got back to his hometown of Camden, New Jersey, Buster got a gig with a trio in nearby Wilmington, Delaware. Dakota Staton heard them, and hired the whole group. It turned out to be the beginning of Buster's stint with singers, which lasted until 1968. After Staton, he moved on to

work with Betty Carter, from whom he learned "all about sensitivity and how to swing without making a lot of noise; how to play good notes and make every note count. I really learned how to play time."

While Buster was working with Carter at Birdland, he was approached by Sarah Vaughan's piano player, who offered him *that* gig. By the end of the week, he had given Carter his notice, and she was, according to Buster, "Ma-aa-aa-d! Really mad. She said, 'That's the story of my life. I sign them and develop them, and then they leave . . .'"

Off he went, and learned how to play in tune. "Sarah Vaughan could sing in front of a 16-piece band, stop the band in rehearsal, and turn around and tell the second trumpet player, 'You're out of tune'. She had perfect pitch, and she was a brilliant musician."

During his tenure with Vaughan, Buster saw Europe for the first time. More specifically, the French Riviera, where he met Miles Davis, Ron Carter, Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock and Tony Williams. Buster was 20, and awed by it all. He went on to work with Nancy Wilson, where he learned, among other things, that he had a penchant for security, and that it's really nice to make money.

He moved out to the West Coast because of his work with Wilson and one day, while he was between gigs, he got a call at home in LA. It was Herbie Hancock.

"He said, 'Hi, I'm in San Francisco with Miles and he wants to know if you can come up and work with us'. My wife was there, and she noticed something strange . . . I was stunned! [Herbie] said, 'Miles will pay you \$300 for the week'."

Despite the fact that playing with Miles was Buster's biggest dream, his earlier experiences prompted him to demand more money. "I said, Herbie, I want \$350."

"So he says, 'Well, Miles only pays the bass player \$300'. To this day, I can't understand that. Is there something inferior about the bass player? A lot of people think that kind of way."

Buster Williams



Herbie called back to report that Miles had agreed, and once again, Buster was packing his bag on a moment's notice.

THE MILES stories are, typically, priceless. Buster met Herbie, Wayne and Tony for a rehearsal at a house where they were staying as guests.

"Now, this is what the first rehearsal consisted of. Herbie sat down at the piano, while Wayne stood around and Tony stood around, and I took out my bass, and Herbie had me play 'So What.'" (Buster sings the first four bars to illustrate.) "We just ran through the head and that was it. They just said, 'Oh, fine. No problem. You'll hear it.' Those were the famous last words: *You'll hear it*. Then they went back to what they'd been doing, and I put my bass in the cover and made my way to the hotel."

What Buster heard that night was unlike anything he'd previously encountered. "The first tune was 'Agitation', and Tony had the tempo *way* up there. You'd look over at Tony and all you'd see was *smoke*. And Herbie's laying out half the time, and when he does play, it's like *supplab* . . ." (Buster attempts to sing a dissonant Hancock chord.) "And when Wayne soloed . . . I mean, what is he playing?"

Although he *felt* lost, Buster must have sounded pretty impressive; after the set, Hancock approached him again: "Miles wants to know if you want to stay with the band." Miles is standing at the bar, behind Herbie, and I can see Miles. I'm brazen, because I'm young, I don't know any better. So I said, 'Herbie, why doesn't Miles ask me himself?' So Herbie took me over to Miles, and Miles said, [Buster rasps] 'Man, I just don't like to fuck with nobody!'"

Buster's hankering for security won out; Nancy Wilson was paying him well beyond what Miles could afford, so he stayed on the payroll and did the gig with Miles as an interim shot every time he could. And he overcame his musical confusion by asking the boss directly, "Miles, man, what am I supposed to be doing up there?" And he told me, 'When they play fast, you play slow. When they play slow, you play fast.'"

When Wilson was off, Buster assumed the role of "New York bass player in Los Angeles", and picked up gigs with Roy Haynes, Elvin Jones, Kenny Durham, anybody who came through town. Though still officially with Wilson, whose dates were gracefully scheduled, Buster started working with Hancock's own band; with Herbie Mann; and with Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, all, incredibly, at the same time. He switched on and off with Ron Carter for dates with Mann and Hancock; and when Paul Chambers died, Buster also took on work in the trio with Jimmy Cobb and Wynton Kelley.

"Then," says Buster, "I had to choose. And for the first time in my life, I took the least-paying job, because it was the most musical and because it was what I wanted to do." He joined Hancock's band and stayed until 1973.

"What I had realised with Miles was further realized with Herbie," Buster says. "We actually got to the point where we came to the bandstand each night with no expectation other

than where the music would take us tonight. And the audience had experiences just like we did. Experiences of levitating, of feeling us levitate. Of fainting. I mean, we would play one song maybe for two hours. It was just extraordinary. It wasn't something that was designed; it was like magic."

THE WHOLE thing might sound like a fairy-tale, were it not for a few empirical notes, like the one at the top of Buster Williams's discography, which explains that it is only a partial (five page) list; the complete one includes approximately 350 albums, among them his wonderful work with Sphere (with Kenny Barron, Ben Riley and Charlie Rouse); and the Great Jazz Trio's Grammy-nominee *Live For Sale* album with Hank Jones and Tony Williams. In addition to these groups, and the Timeless All-Stars, Buster has worked almost continually as a sideman. Pick a name and he's likely to have been there, with artists as diverse as Larry Coryell, Freddie Hubbard, Oliver Lake, Mary Lou Williams, Woody Shaw.

Buster, who attributes some of his success to his conversion to Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism in 1972, says he has finally developed the confidence to put together his own band, and pursue his own music. The jumping-off point is his recent album *Something More* (In & Out) which features Hancock, Shorter, Al Foster and trumpeter Shunzo Ohno along with Williams. His new working band, which is called Buster Williams Quintet: *Something More*, is comprised of Benny Green, Ralph Moore, Ohno, and Billy Drummond. The group toured Europe in March and April 1990, and played the First International Jazz Festival in Moscow last June. Their New York premiere took place at the Village Vanguard late last summer.

Buster describes all this as a quantum leap in his career, which he acknowledges as "a blessing, and something that I'll always be able to share with everybody. Because it's only how much you can share that makes it all worthwhile. If it's just your own private thing and doesn't benefit anybody else, what's the point? There's nothing in this world that's disconnected from anything else."

And just so you know it hasn't been *unmitigated* bedazzlement, there is that other empirical note: in 1972, a few years into the gig with Hancock, Buster, deluded into thinking he could still afford the Nancy Wilson-era life-style, had his Mercedes-280 repossessed. "And I became a real New Yorker," he smiles. Oh well.

#### selected discography:

- Sarah Vaughan *Sassy Savings The Trolls* (Mercury, 1963)
- Dexter Gordon *The Tower Of Power* (Prestige, 1969)
- Jazz Crusaders *Lighthouse 68* (Pacific Jazz, 1968)
- Herbie Hancock *Mundafunk* (Warner Brothers, 1971)
- Nancy Wilson *The Sound Of Nancy Wilson* (Capitol, 1966)
- McCoy Tyner *Samu Laywar* (Milstone, 1974)
- Mary Lou Williams *Free Spirits* (Pablo, 1975)
- The Great Jazz Trio *Live For Sale* (East/West, 1976)
- Buster Williams *Crystal Reflections* (Muse, 1976), *Heartbeat* (Muse, 1978), *Something More* (In & Out, 1989)





|    |   |   |   |
|----|---|---|---|
| L  | I | V | E |
| so | i | r | e |
| *  |   |   |   |

## Piano Forty/2

LONDON  
QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL

FIRST INTO the fray, Jason Rebello took the bold step of opening his brief solo set with a Debussy *Prelude* and ending with a transcription of Garner's "Play, Piano, Play". In between, a couple of tunes from his album and an almost involving version of "Yes And No". Well, it was different from that Arts Council stuff, but very South Bank in its way.

The Contemporary Music Network started to come into its own with the arrival of Joachim Kuhn, who used to be East German and still sounds it. (The original invention had gone to Martial Solal, who would doubtless have sounded ineffably French, at least to our ears.) A virtuoso keyboard technique – and, incidentally, a virtuoso command of the pedals – added detail and texture to what might otherwise have been dour, even tedious. Apart from one gentler, Jarrettish encore, Kuhn the fusionist was left far behind by this turbulent blast.

Howard Riley seemed quite ascetic by comparison. Playing a suite of not particularly linked short pieces reminiscent of his own recent album, he displayed admirable clarity and a breadth of style capable of slipping in a couple of choruses of 12-bar blues. His encore was "Data That Dreams", and there was no reason to think he was regretting his proposal of bringing these players onto the

same stage, if not actually together.

My one reason for regret was Andrew Hill. Top of the bill in both reputation and rarity (he only ever got as far as Heathrow until now), he came over least well. The ideas seemed to be there, and a certain expansiveness in the approach augured good things. But it became evident that his classic sense of time really does need a rhythm-section to anchor it. And whatever may be somewhat nebulous in his actual conception (on this occasion, that is) was rendered twice as vague by his inept use of the sustaining pedal.

BRIAN PRIESTLEY

## Archie Shepp

LONDON  
JAZZ.CAFE

THE JAZZ world is unforgiving. Militant musicians who, instead of charismatically (and conveniently) dying, prefer to do the rounds with a clutch of standards, get scant respect. Archie Shepp is the prime example. His 60s albums – *Mama Ton Tight*, *Fire Music*, *On This Night* – are stone classics of revolutionary jazz, but they are now held against him rather than celebrated. His set – "I Didn't Know About You", "Round Midnight", a blues, a Parker tune – would be considered the flame of the tradition played by Dexter Gordon: from Shepp it is dismissed as retrograde laziness.

Actually the ripping weight and hovering tumult of Archie Shepp's tenor saxophone is intact, his pacing of a ballad still heart-rendingly poignant. The smears and twists – legacies of freedom – add a shocking immediacy to his larger-than-

Webster tone. His alto playing intriguingly applies post-Trace distortions to the lighter horn, but it is the tenor that speaks. Compared to the soulless slipstream aimed at by too many young jazzers this is matchless music, the blurred passion carving strange new shapes: real music in real time.

Pianist Horace Parlan failed to show on the first night, so they played as a trio, opening with Parlan's "Arrival" (ho ho). With a drummer as fleet and dense on cymbal work as George Brown, the extra space was welcome. Bassist Wayne Dockery is a great discovery, funky and magical. He followed Shepp's exhortations with telling solos: a personal, black-and-tan tone and a delightful bluesy kick.

Shepp sang the blues loudly – "Witherspoon on a dull day" – his physical resemblance to Louis Armstrong a little close for comfort (mercifully, no handkerchief). Horace Parlan's presence later in the week at least protected us from Shepp's piano doodling, though the classic quartet format seemed to smother rather than spark Shepp's fire.

Still, Shepp has a *sound*, and you put up with anything to bask in it one more time.

BEN WATSON

## The Anglo Italian Quartet

LONDON  
THE PLOUGH

THE NEW spirit of cooperation in Europe? A brave new step towards 1992 and all that? Well, it's nothing new for British musicians to be playing alongside other Europeans but not usually in Britain. It's a pity this kind of thing doesn't happen more often but this

rather backward (in some ways) island is an unattractive proposition even for the big names.

Enrico Fazio and Fiorenzo Sordini (bass and drums respectively) are not big names but reasonably successful in their home country. They have known Elton Dean for some ten years and Harry Beckett for three. And since Dean and Beckett know each other, the group seemed like good sense, and so it is.

Fairly straight-ahead, modal stuff, but full of crisp energy and a freedom which breaks the surface here and there. The opener set the tone for the evening, an undulating, waltz-time motif which left the soloists fairly free to wander away from the pedal and back again.

There was a good elastic feel to the band right from the outset due, largely, to the Italian pair, who remained exceptionally aware and responsive throughout. If I speak of them as one instrument it is simply because that is how they functioned. Repeatedly scrunching up the bear and letting it go slack again, they were able to follow the contours of the front line as well as creating new spaces. Elton Dean's free-ranging approach would sometimes draw them so far away from the shores of the tune that they threatened to come adrift altogether but always seemed to scramble back to safety. The saxophonist was on good form. Weaving his twisted pop lines in slow waves, he can sound as if he were playing to the beat of his own private rhythm and not the one on the bandstand; the trick, which he has mastered, is to make the difference between them an illusion.

The main attraction (for me anyway) was the unique trumpet playing of Harry Beckett, surely one of the greatest



*Hill note blues: Andrew Hill plays himself to a handstand*

*Photo by Andrew Potthecary*



trumpeters we have had in this country. At 55 his playing is still full of jagged spikes and lightning changes of direction. With his oddly affecting, cracked tone he delivered passages of extreme aggression and great lyricism almost simultaneously. Catch him whenever you can; and watch out for the CD just released by this bustling band.

ROLAND RAMANAN

## Hervé-Scheyder-Chautemps-Moutin

PARIS  
FNAC FORUM

ONE OF the "associated manifestations" of the Paris Jazz Festival, this was even cast in the form of an invitation from keyboard players Antoine Hervé and Patrick Scheyder (who together form the basis of a collective called Hexameron) to saxophonist Jean-Louis Chautemps and bassist François Moutin.

This is something that Hervé and Scheyder offer regularly: with backgrounds in both jazz and contemporary music they then invite others to a kind of free improvisational encounter, where the only limits are what you can't do on the instruments, or failure of ideas.

So the stage is set at the FNAC auditorium, a comfortable small theatre inside a record store which is itself immured in the labyrinthine Forum Des Halles. From the left, Scheyder is at the piano, with Moutin seated in its curve. Chautemps starts right towards the back of the stage, still fiddling with his alto as Hervé kicks off from a rather dated-looking synth (you know, the ones with rocker-switches and wood surrounds, rather like 1960s hi-fi). No-

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| L | I | V | E |
| w | i | r | e |
| * |   |   |   |

thing dated about the crisp, uncompromising sounds he produces though; as Scheyder follows, then Moutin and finally Chautemps, the synth encloses the acoustic instruments, setting them within a three-dimensional musical structure yet not seeking to dominate them.

For the first ten minutes the lights stay up, maybe to assist that familiar phenomenon of audience-participation in modern music - getting up and leaving. By now, some terms of reference have been briefly flashed up: to Taylor, to Ayler, to early Boulez and to some extant movie scores of the 1940s, and the music has moved into its own complex grooves and patterns. There's no doubt these guys are not just *working*, they're enjoying every minute of it.

Fifty minutes in, with Chautemps now on tenor, a huge rifting climax emerges, based somewhere along the line of "C-Jam Blues" Could be it's over, but no. Hervé displaces Scheyder at the piano; Scheyder moves to the synth seat, but just sits, so we're down to three and a purely acoustic passage, and Chautemps is back to alto. After 70 minutes ideas are running low, though Hervé and Moutin give the distinct impression that by now a little matter of having nothing left to say isn't going to stop them playing. But Chautemps exercises his seniority, calls them to order with a couple of avuncular om-tidly-om-poms, and that's it.

So, free music, free admis-

sion, a thoroughly satisfying set, and still loads of the evening left to sit around over a *deni* and discuss whether you've got the energy to go see Jimmy Smith at the New Morning. Nah.

JACK COOKE

## Some Other Country

MANCHESTER  
BAND ON THE  
WALL

MUSIC WHICH sounded like most of the things instrumental jazz-rock could be but rarely ever is, and an audience vociferously communicative in its appreciation of the fact. This was something of a triumphant hometown performance by Manchester-based quartet Some Other Country.

Virtually an unknown entity outside of the North West, the group have a formidable local reputation, one which currently locates them, accurately as it so happens, at the apex of UK fusion. Interestingly, on the evidence of this particular showing, the qualities and directions most typical of the contemporary fusion genre seem to have been excluded from their music. For instance: in place of the post-Weather Report standards of labyrinthine complexity, excessive ornamentation, textural contrast and pan-ethnic implications, the group deployed simple melodic and rhythmic motifs, extended vamps and ostinatos and song titles like "Love Child" and "Soul Head" as a means of organising their music. Consequently it tended to emerge in the classic manner; organic, intuitive and with a compelling improvisatory essence.

The playing of guitarist

Make Walker in particular would appear to suit such an open-ended approach to the fusion process. During the night's two sets his intense, ambitious solos were executed at a pitch of technical fluency and emotional involvement, progressing as tumultuous sonic clouds on the white rock/black funk equations of "Fortune Cookie" and "Mump Beak" or accumulating parallels with players as diverse as John Scofield and Charlie Byrd on the "lighter" moments of "Oxymoron" and "Four Detectives".

Around these alternately storming and palliative performances, which were only slightly diminished by the guitarist's rather eccentric on-stage presence, the rest of the group moved in and out of focus with varying degrees of clarity. Bassist Gary Culshaw and drummer Steve Gilbert are experienced, responsive players but were perhaps no more than functional in roles that Melvin Gibbs and Cornell Rochester have long since elevated to high art. Often Culshaw's bass lines would require bolstering by the left-hand chords of keyboard player Roy Powell. When not occupying a supporting role, Powell's own solos revealed some unexpected affinities; during the fast, rising but rather mistakenly titled "Dark Bogarde", for instance, he combined harmonic and rhythmic ambiguities with voicings reminiscent of Django Bates, whilst an untitled piece half-way through the second set managed to suggest the marginal reveries of a player like Don Preston with the cross-over discipline of Herbie Hancock circa *Headhunters* and 1974.

Like I said: for once, jazz-rock as it could be.

TONY HERRINGTON



## THE LABEL On A Bottle Of Jack Daniel's Whiskey Is For Folks Who Aren't Too Impressed By Labels.

Our label has always lacked colour, dating to when Jack Daniel sold whiskey in the crocks up above.

You see, our founder said what went in his bottle was more important than what went on it.

And we still say that at the Tennessee distillery today.

If your interest lies in a truly smooth sippin' whiskey, we recommend Jack Daniel's. But if you like colourful labels, well there's no shortage of brands to pick from.

---

SMOOTH SIPPIN' TENNESSEE WHISKEY



## tongue twister

Steve Reich has been retrograded by setting speech to music since his early days as an originator of minimalism. After the success of 1988's *Different Trains* he's now working on a large music-theatre project. **The Cave.** Jonathan Cio wonders if it's just a phase he's going through. Photo by Matt Cooke

IN THE programme note for *Different Trains*, that bracing memorial both to his own childhood and to a lost generation of Holocaust victims, Steve Reich suggested that his blend of live instrumentation and sampled speech fragments would "lead to a new kind of documentary music video theatre in the not too distant future". Reviewing the piece following its premiere in London towards the end of 1988, I can remember raising a slightly sceptical eyebrow at that assertion. It sounded rather grand, somehow, coming from a composer whose published statements have usually been confined to musical specifics. But, as it turns out, Reich knew exactly what he was talking about. Even before the writing of *Different Trains* he had just such a theatre project in mind: it's called *The Cave*, it's due to be premiered in Stuttgart next year, and – despite the fact that he was over here to promote a new album of orchestral music – it's very much what he's most interested in talking about right now.

Reich has always been fascinated by the relationship between music and text, both as a political and a musical problem: which words do you choose and, once chosen, how do you set them without doing violence to their social and cultural context? Temperamentally drawn to the Williams/Creeley/Olsen/Ginsberg line of American vernacular poetry, firmly rooted in speech-rhythms, Reich began by attempting some settings of Williams while he was still at Juilliard. The results were none too successful.

"If spoken speech is the inspiration for the written word, it may be that in setting it in fixed metres, you're fixing it like, you know, the head of a tiger over your mantelpiece, if that's your bent. You've fixed it all right, but it's dead as a doornail. And that was my reaction to setting William Carlos Williams when I was a music student."

Tape recorders provided a double breakthrough: by working with tapes of a Pentecostal preacher in *It's Gonna Rain* (1965)

and one of the Harlem Six in *Come Out* (1966), Reich not only discovered the process of "phasing", whereby two or more repeating patterns shift gradually in and out of phase with each other, but was able to give the pieces a documentary quality – collapsing, in effect, the distinction between form and content.

"Going back to the 60s, there was electronic music, and there was *musique concrète*, and there was sort of an argument between these two styles. I always found the *musique concrète* side of it much more interesting, and the most famous example was Stockhausen's *Gejang Der Jünglinge*. But what makes the piece great is the *Jünglinge* – the kid's voice. That's what makes the piece vibrant, not the electronic oscillators." The idea behind Reich's first two tape pieces, then, was "taking something that's been said and intensifying it through repetition. But the voice character of the subject matter is crucial: that's your singer, that's your text, and in those pieces it was the entire instrumentation."

Reich's immediate concern was to apply the phasing process, or a close approximation of it, to instrumental music: this led to *Piano Phase* and *Violin Phase* (both 1967) and then on to an ever more elaborate series of instrumental pieces crowned by *Music For Eighteen Musicians* in 1976. By now he had developed some sophisticated variations on the phasing technique – including the process of "build up and reduction", whereby more complicated patterns are allowed to emerge gradually by the substitution of beats for rests over an extended period – but his basic material still tended to consist of relatively small and manageable melodic cells. That started to change in 1976, when he made some studies of Hebrew cantillation and began to use longer and more interesting lines in pieces like *Music For A Large Ensemble and Octet*. Finally Reich emerged as a full-blown melodist with *Tehillim* (1981), a setting of Hebrew psalms and his first attempt to combine

Steve Reich



words and music since his student days.

IN *TEHILLIM* Reich seemed to have found an acceptable solution to the problem of setting texts, by using constantly changing metres: a method which he also finally applied to William Carlos Williams in *The Desert Music* (1984). But *The Desert Music* was also symptomatic of another development in his career – the crossover to large-scale orchestral commissions and the tentative acceptance of his music by the classical establishment. The culmination of this period – and, he assures us, his last orchestral work for the foreseeable future – was *The Four Seasons*, first performed in 1987 but only now making it into the record shops (on Elektra Nonesuch 979 220). With its leisurely, enigmatic first movement and thundering finale, it seems to have more – well, *passion* than anything Reich had written up to that point, although he is wary of discussing it in those terms.

"In the first movement particularly there are longer and more fully developed melodic lines than would have been the case if I hadn't written *Tehillim* and *The Desert Music*. I also very consciously remember that when I wrote *The Four Seasons* we were about to go away up to Vermont for the summer and I really wanted to write a piece which began slowly, contemplatively: that had an inward, more meditative state of mind. Most of my pieces begin hammer and tongs: you're off and running at about  $\frac{1}{2}$  = 184 and off we go! So I wanted something that would completely foil that. Technically, it's a series of canons at the unison producing resulting patterns, but because of the nature of the lines and their chromatic bent and their length it does give a very different impression.

"Charles Olsen once said, 'We don't get older, we stand more revealed'. So I think it's not so much that you decide to write a more emotional piece, it's just that a certain kind of honesty seems to come with age. Beyond that, to analyse it in emotional terms I think is not productive."

ALTHOUGH REICH'S orchestral writing is never less (and often more) than expert, there's a strong sense that he seems happier working with his own and other small ensembles: a bit like someone who can cut an impressive figure in a tuxedo when he wants to, but still somehow looks better wearing clothes of his own choosing. The 1980s, he feels, "were a very conservative period. There was a lot of going back to Mahler and Bruckner and so on, and there was also a lot of going back to opera. I felt very removed from this in many ways." In particular he has problems with contemporary composers who continue to write operas in "some bel canto form that had its genesis in La Scala in the 18th century, based on the fact that people have to yell it out because there are no microphones and you've got to be heard over an orchestra".

*The Cave* will be scored for a fairly modest ensemble of about 24 musicians, including a string quartet and pairs of amplified woodwinds. The players and singers will move about on scaffolding between five large video screens which will present "interviews, landscapes, architectural and archival footage in

sequences timed with live music": to this end Reich is collaborating with the video artist Beryl Korot, who also happens to be his wife. The theme of the piece is Moslem-Jewish relations, presented specifically in terms of their historical and biblical background – the cave in question being the burial place of Abraham, in what is now the largely Arab town of Hebron on the West Bank. Both Jews and Moslems trace their lineage back through Abraham (or Ibrahim), and this cave is therefore symbolically important as the only site which is sacred to followers of both religions.

*The Cave* will be roughly two-and-a-half hours long, but so far Reich has only written about an hour's worth of music. What's holding him back is not lack of inspiration but the time it takes to collect interview footage from his diverse and geographically far-flung range of Arab and Jewish sources. As in *Different Trains*, his compositional method is to feed speech fragments into a sampler and to allow the pitch and rhythm of the spoken voices to determine his musical material: thus completing the loop that takes us back to the aesthetic of *It's Gonna Rain* and *Come Out*, allowing content to determine form.

"For me, *Different Trains* was like saying, OK, now we go all the way back to those early tape pieces and put it all together: literally take the recorded material, not just the written text, and put that into an ensemble of musicians. So that piece for me is pivotal. And it was also written with this theatre piece in mind. I didn't know what it would be about, but I knew it would take several years to do and be a very time-consuming and expensive project, so it seemed a little foolhardy just to go launching off into this thing, not being really sure whether these techniques added up to anything. So *Different Trains*, aside from being the piece that it is, was also done as a study, to see if this worked.

"The piece is not a concert with video, and it's not an opera," he insists. "It's on the cusp, and the tension between whether there is any acting or impersonation on the part of the singers or whether they are in fact always themselves is part of what's dramatically interesting."

Of course, this also means that new compromises have to be made when selecting suitable passages from the interview tapes: "A lot of what is said is sometimes said in such a way whereby it's really a bore to listen to in terms of the music of the speech. Conversely there are some people who have just a lovely voice but either their English is incomprehensible or they're irrelevant from an interview standpoint. But, marvelously, there are about ten people in the first act so far who just have everything together."

And what about the interviewees: how do they feel about having their contributions used in this way? I wondered, for instance, if Reich had had any feedback from his governess Virginia, whose reminiscences formed an important part of *Different Trains*.

"I took the record out to Virginia and played her a little bit of it," he recalls. "She looked at me and said – 'Did anybody buy this?' I said, 'Yes, actually, Virginia, it's doing very well.' So I heard her listen some more, and she said: 'It's nice.'"



**FREE  
CD's**

with your subscription to

# EAR

MAGAZINE OF NEW MUSIC

Ear Magazine and Absolut Vodka present the Absolut CD, a new music compilation included in subscribers' length CD of recordings—often rare or unreleased material—by artists featured in the issue:

**NOV '90 — NEW MUSIC CANADA**  
**DEC-JAN '91 — JAPANESE PERSPECTIVE**  
**MARCH '91 — IMPROVISATION/COMPOSITION**  
**JULY/AUG '91 — THE NEW WORLD MUSIC**

BACK ISSUES INCLUDE: ANTHONY BRAXTON, JOHN ZORN, LAURENCE ANDERSON, BILL FRIEDL, DIAMANDA GALAS, DEEKE BAILEY, MAX ROACH, SONIC YOUTH, STEVE REICH, MURAL, RICHARD ABRAMS AND JOHN CAGE



UNITED STATES: CD's in issues prior to your subscription start date are available while supplies last

Annual subscription **\$20** (Individuals, US, Canada, & Mex.) **\$40** (Foreign & Institutions)

Send this form with your check or money order (US only) to EAR, Inc. 131 York Street #205 New York, NY 10013 1-800-732-7171 • 800-734-8839

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

Zip

STATE

## free gig – bring your own audience!

With concerts and venues in short supply, is improvised music in serious

crisis? Or has it always been a music for the minutest of minorities? Wire

investigator Barry Witherden spoke to the players, the promoters and

the player-promoters who are fighting in the front line against recession.

IN AN ERA when style and marketing potential are nearly all, a genre which cannot be readily defined, let alone packaged, stands little chance. Free improvised jazz music (perm any two terms to create your own preferred label) has always been a minority interest, and during the 70s and 80s it became increasingly true that you couldn't market what you couldn't label. Take World Music: it had always been reasonably accessible but it only became a commercial proposition after some bright spark gave it a label (albeit a meaningless one) which caught on.

Assessing the likely turn-out is particularly difficult with improvised music. It's not easy to make a venue viable on that basis, but it was ever thus: when I first went to a Derek Bailey gig, half of the audience turned out to be the Phil Wachsmann group. Derek has been ploughing his individual and dedicated furrow for over a quarter of a century, and is now working more frequently than ever, though he has not played publicly in Britain for over a year. He reckons that the newer players get more work than he and Evan Parker did when entering the improvised music field, but they don't expect to work in jazz clubs, and many of them have not come to free music via jazz anyway.

Despite the problems there seems to be no shortage of musicians fascinated by free improvisation. Derek commented that until quite recently there would be the same small coterie of musicians that he would expect to play with wherever he

went, but today he will be unfamiliar with many of his fellow performers.

It has always been left to musicians to create their own playing opportunities. Bailey has been prominent in this area, organising the Company seasons for many years, allowing musicians of varying statures to come together in open situations. Sometimes there would be a committed fan who would help out – Derek and I recalled the admirable work of Janice Christianson, who ran the Albion Music Club in Holland Park – but self-help was usually the only way.

JON LLOYD, a fine saxophonist who eschews empty, if fashionable, pyrotechnics, is perhaps his generation's counterpart to Derek in London. He has run several venues showcasing improvised music with an imaginative programming policy. Of these, The Tactile Club at the Grafton Arms was relatively successful because it was central, but the overheads were too high. Getting a club established is largely a question of being there: if people know they can hear free jazz every week at a particular venue there's more likelihood of a decent turnout than for a one-off gig.

The Arts Council has an improvised music touring scheme which requires musicians to set up tour dates and then apply for money. The Council will then consider the schemes and fund some of them. Last year Lloyd was awarded a grant for a tour with Phil Wachsmann but it was tough persuading

*This month Eyewire leads an ear to improvisation with Free Jazz by Illustrator Paul Davis*



venues to present them, and they ended up with too few gigs for it to be worthwhile. Most venues willing to host improvised music can't afford to pay much and musicians often end up out-of-pocket having set up gigs themselves.

Lloyd's experiences reinforce the views of Peter Urpeth of Jazz Services, which was founded eight years ago and is funded by the Arts Council. They are allocated money to run tours: within that budget they control their own expenditure. Usually they organise about five or six tours per year; in 1990-91 they attempted to make more of those improvised music tours, but Peter says that over the last year it's become apparent that there's a substantial decline in opportunities to tour improvised music.

"The number of venues one could guarantee in advance and where it's comfortable, the musicians and the audience are treated well and the gig is publicised properly, is only about three or four, including London.

"Jazz Services tries to pay all musicians roughly the same and treat them equally, regardless of the type of music. This proves impossible because of the nature of the funding venues get. Whether it's a general decline in the money available or to do with poll-tax and rate-capping, public arts venues are increasingly less adventurous, possibly because administrators are often generalists programming on marketing rather than artistic factors.

"There are places with commitment which can be relied on to take these tours, but the publicly-funded venues have been devastated by poll-tax and rate-capping. When trying to organise a tour for Marilyn Crispell I ran round and could only get four or five gigs. That's insulting to artists of her calibre. The problems are not logistical: they're financial and due to a lack of commitment. Twenty-five years ago British musicians were one of the originating forces of improvised music, but now it's in danger of dying out here. London is one of the worst areas. The only venue of any real standing with any commitment to improvised music is the Jazz Cafe."

Urpeth sits on the improvised music touring scheme committee, which had £21,000 last year to allocate between about nine bands. As Lloyd and Wachsmann's experience illustrated, awards are usually not even enough for the recipients to contemplate setting up a tour. I raised the hoary question of whether there are no gigs because there is no audience or vice versa. Peter thinks it's the latter.

"Promoters with a venue make all sorts of assumptions about the audience that I don't think are supported. They have a perception that improvised music is somehow inherently unpopular, regardless of whether people turn up or not. It's supposed to be too esoteric, but if you listen to Alex McGuire & Steve Noble you wouldn't think that was esoteric.

"The Contemporary Music Network needs to address the situation and make a substantial commitment to touring. If it's at the expense of the CMN's mainstream (whatever that is - Ed) touring programme, so be it. The CMN should develop a network of venues. Jazz Services would obviously have a function to perform but the initiative needs to come from the

top. There are dozens of well-equipped arts centres of the right size, say 150-200 seats."

Reviewing Barry Guy's *Double Trouble* (Wire 82/3), I wondered about the chances of hearing it as originally written for both the London Jazz Composers Orchestra and Globe Unity. Barry tried for three years to get the CMN to put this on, but without success. Peter Urpeth says Jazz Services was given money by the Arts Council to help tour the LJCO but won't tour them itself. "We could only find four gigs over a year for them: two at the Camden Festival and two outside London, one of which we are promoting directly."

BUT WHAT about new musicians? "There are new players coming up but it's just a trickle. That's an educational thing. Look at the tutors of jazz courses. They're straight and, harmonically, theoretically-based, and if you go to trendy venues to hear fusion you can hear the chord sequences from conservatoire harmonic orthodoxy."

Perhaps there is little respect for "composition on the run".

"True. There's proper music and then there's improvisation. There may be improvisation and jazz audiences but there's no improvisation or even jazz culture. There's a lack of interest in music and musicians *per se*. It's not about taking a risk with your time and ticket price but being interested in the music and how and why it works and why it fails."

Richard Scott was for a year the Secretary of the London Musicians' Co-Operative. He now lives in Manchester, where, apart from the Band On The Wall, there is one, musician-run, regular venue at the Millstone pub. Scott says it's cheaper to put on gigs in Manchester because there are still rooms in pubs unused. In London, publicans and breweries are anxious to make a profit out of every square foot because of high overheads. "Leeds and Sheffield have intermittently strong scenes but these depend on the next grant. They'll put on a season of gigs then discontinue until more money is available." Scott also thinks that poll tax and rate-capping have had an effect. "Newham were going to fund some gigs but, after a Council discussion on poll tax, arts funding was scrapped altogether."

He agrees that a lot of people are coming into improvised music but that many of these new players are not coming from jazz. They are often contemptuous of the current jazz scene. He thinks most new people in the field have no illusions about becoming professionals. That's fine for them if not for the scene, and certainly bad for those who wish to be full-timers.

The problem with improvised music is that it requires commitment from the audience to an extent that few other genres do, a commitment to really *listen*. A visit to most venues indicates that this is something jazz audiences, in contrast to rock and classical crowds, are evidently unwilling to do. Improvised music is still fresh and there is plenty of new blood. The music industry will not promote it because it will never be popular or profitable, so it's down to the public sector. "The Royal National Music Improvisation Company" has a certain ring to it.

**EVAN PARKER TRIO  
'ATLANTA'**

EVAN PARKER  
**Atlān'tā**  
BARRY GUY • PAUL LYTTON

(CD IMP CD 1867LP, IMP LP 1867 MC IMPC 18517)

**EVAN PARKER: TENOR & SOPRANO SAXES  
BARRY GUY: BASS  
PAUL LYTTON: DRUMS & PERCUSSION**

A concert recording by one of the most enduring, exciting and consistently creative groups involved in free improvisation. The rapport is breathtaking, the level of invention awe-inspiring.

This is free playing at its finest and most exacting. *Richard Cook*

NEW  
RELEASES

**CONGLOMERATE  
'THE BIBLE SAYS'**

**CONGLOMERATE**  
THE BIBLE SAYS



(CD IMP CD 18821)

**TIM CROWTHER: GUITAR  
TED EMMETT: TRUMPET  
STEVE FRANKLIN: KEYBOARDS  
NICK STEPHENS: BASS STEVE CLARKE: DRUMS**

Fusion music for the 90s - intelligent, startling and provocative. This release is sure to see Crowther established as the latest in a formidable line of great British guitarists. A superb recording surely destined to be regarded as a classic in years to come.

FROM THE LABEL DEVOTED TO THE MUSIC THAT MATTERS

**Impetus Records, 587 Wandsworth Road, London SW8 3JD. Tel: 071-720 4460**

**THE ARTS COUNCIL OF GREAT BRITAIN**

Applications are now being accepted from groups wishing to tour on the 1992/93 Contemporary Music Network. CMN tours a wide range of music, including jazz, world, vocal, electronic, improvised, music theatre and contemporary classical. Successful applicants will be expected to contribute to the CMN outreach programme, and applications from groups with experience of education or community projects are welcomed.

Application forms and guidelines are available from:

Contemporary Music Network,  
Arts Council,  
14 Great Peter Street,  
London SW1P 3NQ.  
(071) 333 0100

Please enclose an SAE.

Closing date for applications is  
Friday 12 April 1991.

Arts Council

Sensational new CD from OGUN ...

**LOUIS MOHOLO'S  
'VIVA LA BLACK'**

**'E X I L E' OGCD 03**

Sean Bergin, Claude Deppa, Frank Douglas,  
Steve Williamson, Thebe Lipere, Paul Rogers

distributed by

**CADILLAC**

180 Shaftesbury Ave, London WC2H 0BJ  
Tel: 071 836 3646 Fax: 071 497 9102

P.S. lost chance!

Stream Records sale: LPs £2.50, CDs £8.50  
plus post & packing, S.A.E. for list etc.  
(Visitors by appointment only please)

**BILLY  
JENKINS  
VOTP**

**The Cassette Collection**

We accept no responsibility for  
persons listening to our music on  
personal stereos in public places.

Distributed to realistic record shops  
by Cadillac (071-836 3646) and  
Recommended Distribution  
(071-622 8834)

## speaking of the essence

Saxophonist **Evan Parker** is among the world's foremost

free improvisers. Also a persuasive spokesman for the music,

he guides **Graham Lock** through the joys of juggling,

spinning wheels and unravelling the carpet! Photo by **Coney Jay**.

IMAGINE: BEARD, spectacles, tenor or soprano sax. Already many music-lovers will be thinking 'Evan Parker'. Master instrumentalist, advocate for free improvisation, creator of a singular solo music, Evan Parker is one of the modern era's most extraordinary and original voices.

The ex-botany student-cum-jazz fanatic who came to London in the mid-60s and made his mark playing with SME, Parker's biography is too well-known to need further rehearsal here. In the last 25 years he has played in a variety of peripheral contexts, from the Charlie Watts big band to the Michael Nyman ensemble, but his first allegiance has always been to free improvisation. That vocation he has pursued particularly in two long-standing trios – with Barry Guy and Paul Lytton; with Alex von Schlippenbach and Paul Lovens – and, since 1974, in the context of solo saxophone performance, becoming, as Richard Cook wrote in 1985, "arguably the finest of all solo improvisers".

I met with Evan on 18/1/91 and our three-hour conversation produced enough material for three or four articles. In this instance, I've chosen to highlight some of the more abstract areas we touched upon. Free improvising may be the most ancient of musical practices but it remains the hardest to describe; Evan, I think, comes as close as anyone has to naming the unnameable. In part one he talks about how and why he improvises and about his music's links (or not) to the jazz tradition, to politics, to metaphysics; in part two he traces the evolution and practice of his remarkable solo music, that sensuous, finespun soprano sound-flow with which, helped by circular breathing techniques, he is able to create "the illusion of polyphony".

For the sake of clarity, I've occasionally included the questions and/or quotations which sparked Evan's replies, but most of what follows is uninterrupted Parker. The snake, who appears in such titles as *The Snake Decides* and *"The Snake As Road Sign"* is, says Evan, a very personal and resonant symbol for him: "especially of treachery . . . untrapability, danger. Plus the other things . . . the snake-charmer, hypnotism, self-removal." Perhaps these are the aphorisms of the snake, as told by a master charmer.

### I. Stepping Through The Wall: Group Improvisation

I STILL use the word 'jazz'. For me I'm playing jazz." Evan Parker, 1973.

"What's important to me is that my work is seen in a

particular context, coming out of a particular tradition. I don't really care what people call it but I would want it to be clear that I was inspired to play by listening to certain people who continue to be talked about mainly in jazz contexts. People like John Coltrane, Eric Dolphy, Cecil Taylor – these were people who played music that excited me to the point where I took music seriously myself. That continues to be the case. That's where what I'm doing has to make most sense, if it makes any sense at all."

"If you relate to that tradition, I think there comes a point where you either have a personal voice or you don't. If you don't, you continue to be talked about as somebody who sounds like somebody else. And if you do, you start being talked about as somebody who other people sound like!"

"It's been fantastic for me to play in the last couple of years with Cecil Taylor because he was one of my inspirations when I was still learning to play. Especially in group improvisation terms. That original trio with Jimmy Lyons and Sunny Murray was, for me, more interesting than the trio of Albert Ayler, Gary Peacock and Sunny Murray, though that was also fantastic. It was to do with the looseness of it all, the openness of the interaction; that it wasn't based on a pre-given grid, either of a harmonic scheme or a metric scheme. OK, there may have been some compositional, motivic elements at work, but the improvisations are very organic – based on listening and interaction."

"The continuity with the jazz tradition is there . . . it is in the energy and intensity both of the feelings and of the way they are expressed." Ian Carr on Evan Parker, 1973.

"Of course the music expresses something, but I'm not sure whether it's as simple as expressing how you feel and that being the intention or the aim. My aim is often to make myself feel better by playing." (Laughs)

"In the case of Coltrane – my choice of instrument, of everything, was determined by that influence. It's hard to pick any one thing. Maybe the most important was his ability to



move on from what he'd already done to something else. In the most exceptional way. I can't think of any other player who was prepared to *abandon* so much of what they were about in order to move to the next thing. And it speaks of the *essence* of improvisation – that ability to abandon what you know in favour of moving towards the unknown territory."

*"When the music's really going you switch from left-brain activity to right-brain activity – and once you've made that switch the left brain can think about more or less anything it wants. The laundry, anything."* Evan Parker, 1985.

"The speeds of decision-making that are involved in group improvisation go beyond analytical thought, in the same way that playing Chopin must go beyond analytical thought. There are . . . larger patterns involved, which have to be grasped as patterns – patterns of speed, patterns of intensity."

*So are you aware of what you're playing as you're playing it?*

"You're very aware. You're absolutely in it. Of course there's a certain amount of anticipation and tactical considerations which help to make the bigger shape. But on a detail for detail level, it's not done by adding one thing to another, it's done by . . . instantaneous is the wrong word because you've done it before you've even thought about it. You can only listen to it . . ."

*As it happens?*

" . . . after it's happened. (Laughs) But you've done it before you've thought of it."

"There's an analogy with the spokes on a revolving wheel. Everything's in motion, the rim of the wheel is supported by the spokes, but when the whole thing is turning you don't see the spokes any more. If the thing didn't have that speed of rotation, it would make sense to count the spokes and think about them one at a time. But the whole point is to get the thing revolving and the spokes are only there to enable the rim of the wheel to turn. There's some kind of equivalent to that in the music. You could, you can, after the event, slow the thing down and look at how all the pieces fit together. But the whole point is that those pieces fit together in that way in order to generate the speed of movement which *is* the music."

"The music is not what you hear by analysis, it's what is there in the real time of the performance."

*If not by analysis, how do you carry forward your music?*

"A lot of the idea of going forward will be to do with what sound like very technical considerations. Because that's the only way you can think about the possibilities. It's as though the emotional content can only be conveyed by a technical vehicle which evolves. So the emotional message remains the same, but in order for it to retain its meaning and its freshness, the technical content of the music has to change."

"I'm currently interested in approaching the challenge of reconciling free improvisation with studio recording in a slightly different way. I'd like to work with shorter . . . forms is the wrong word . . . shorter durations for pieces. You can work with short durations and it's almost as though you're trying to improvise a larger form through the use of short pieces. That's what I want to get to. To edit as you go, to construct the pieces according to the bigger form you seem to be evolving."

*"What happened with 'The Woe' was, we couldn't ignore the war, we were in the war, therefore to stay in the music we had to let the war in the music and the music became war."* Steve Lacy, 1983.

"The way Steve integrates improvisation and composition is anyway rather different from the kind of so-called free improvising that the groups I organise do. So a situation like that wouldn't arise. I don't think it would because the music is . . . it's a medium of transcendence. It's not about mundane matters. Whatever you want to call that other dimension – mystical, spiritual, cosmic – it's the recognition that music has a chance to generate emotions, feelings, thoughts which are *metaphysical*: not worldly, other-worldly. That's the attraction."

"And maybe, in the worst case, escapism, in the sense of running away from reality, comes into it. I prefer to think . . . I think it was Brahms who said to somebody that they have religion but we have something better – speaking of music."

"Which is not to say that I don't have political thoughts. But I don't think about them as having the same kind of possibilities for me as the music does. Because it's a separate life. Or, in the words of John Stevens, 'another little world'. It's as though you step through a wall, in the way that a character does in one of Doris Lessing's novels. The heroine steps through the wall and starts to live her life on the other side, which is in a slightly different time and place. That's how it is. Music, freely improvised group music especially, is a way of stepping through the wall to another place where things are, in some ways, more straightforward."

"If you look at music as a continuum between two polar extremes, then at one extreme is a music that is totally predictable because you know everything in it from start to finish; at the other extreme there is music that is so surprising you have trouble understanding it *as* music – say an indeterminate piece by John Cage."

"I guess I like to be closer to the pole that is about the unknown and the unfamiliar. But at the same time I want to feel that it's *about* something, that it has meaning. So the aim is not to 'let sounds be sounds', or however Cage put it, but to acknowledge the fact that producing the sounds means something to you, being in control of the sounds means something to you, interacting with the other players means something to you. And have the outcome, the musical outcome, be at least



an expression of those things."

## 2. Taking The Note For A Walk: Solo Saxophone

"THE EVOLUTION is there, but only when you look backwards. It wasn't that in 1974 I decided it would be a good thing if I could evolve a solo music which would sound the way it does now."

*But having come a certain way?*

"You still don't know where it's going. (Laughs) It's much easier to talk about where you've come from than to say where you're going next."

"When I first started to think about trying to be original – which is as awkward a proposition as it sounds, but at some point you have to decide: what am I trying to do? what am I trying to sound like? – I thought the space, the *niche* that I could look for was somewhere between Albert Ayler, Pharoah Sanders, with some of the floating quality, the rhythmic quality, of the way John Tchicai played. I thought I could achieve... not exactly a synthesis, but I could work my way through the gaps that were left between what those people were doing."

"In the case of Ayler it was to do with his access to the overtone, the altissimo register, overtone control of the instrument. In the case of Pharoah, it was to do with his articulation, certain kinds of double-tonguing, triple-tonguing. And in Tchicai's case, to do with his way of floating over already a non-metric pulse, on those New York Art Quartet records. To spell it out, it sounds very mechanical but I was actually *emotionally* moved to want to be in that space. It wasn't just a calculation, I felt an *impulse*."

"Once you start to have an idea about what your sound is, then that becomes your reference, your context. Because you approach something in a consistent way, you do generate something recognisable, something you can start to think of as *your* sound, *your* approach. And then everything starts to be channelled into that: like, would this be an appropriate way to go? So, yes, you are pushed in a particular direction by decisions that you've made, which then become internalised and inseparable from your viewpoint. Even though you're nominally free to go anywhere, you become *protective* of a certain notion of yourself, what you are, your sound."

"It was evolved simply to fill the space that was all mine. Suddenly it's all yours!"

"My evolution in solo playing has been to exploit technical possibilities and acoustic possibilities unique to the solo situation. When you have all the space to fill, you can listen more closely to the specific resonances in the room, to the specific interaction with the acoustic, to the overtone components in the sound – the harmonic components in any one note become much more audible. The temptation to fragment individual tones into their harmonic components becomes very

attractive because you can hear yourself that much more closely; you can hear the *detail* of what's happening in any one sound."

*How integral to your music now is the circular breathing?*

"You remember I spoke before about certain processes being necessary to get the wheel up to speed. The circular breathing and the continuous sound is a very useful way of getting the solo engine up to speed for me. Because once the sound has been ringing in the room, in your ears, in the instrument for a certain period of time, it's as though it aids the shift to the right brain."

"There's a kind of danger in being too clear, even too clear with myself, about how these things work. Because if I try to make an analytical method out of how to become non-analytical, then I'm involving myself in some strange contradictions." (Laughs)

"My solo playing at the moment is about overtones and polyrhythms and using certain kinds of polyrhythmic fingering patterns in order to generate the illusion of polyphony. It's a bit like juggling... You have to do the easier tricks first: get into the rhythm and suddenly your body is able to do things which you couldn't do cold."

"The best bits of my solo playing, for me, I can't explain to myself. Certainly I wouldn't know how to go straight to them cold. The circular breathing is a way of starting the engine, but at a certain speed all kinds of things happen which I'm not consciously controlling. They just come out. It's as though the instrument comes alive and starts to have a voice of its own."

*"Finished, it's finished, nearly finished, it must be nearly finished."*

Opening lines to *Endgame* by Samuel Beckett, EP's favourite author.

"There are two ways of ending for me. One is where the thing unravels. If you think about the music as the pattern in a carpet – you know how the fringe of a carpet is made out of the weft, you can see the component threads? Sometimes it's interesting for me to let the thing unravel so the pattern is gradually pulled apart and you're left with only the threads, the strands."

"Or another way – and again this is me observing what tends to happen rather than me describing a plan of action – is the complexities reach such a pitch that they cancel one another out and you get a blur of... almost like white noise. Not white noise but an impenetrable kind of thickness. The whole thing *locks*. It's a gridlock. Everything locks solid and – it stops!"

"There's no form in the sense of having a bigger architectural notion that the playing then provides the details for. There do tend to be shapes. It tends to move from simple to complex

continued on page 64

## call me MR DRUMS

*It's been over 25 years since Louis Moholo left his native South Africa with fellow Blue Notes Johnny Dyani, Mongezi Feza, Chris McGregor and Dudu Pukwana. In this rare interview with Richard Scott, the master drummer pays tribute to his friends and recalls both their early years playing under apartheid and the group's explosive impact on the London jazz scene of the 1960s. Photo by Coneyl Jay.*

LOUIS MOHOLA is one of the world's great drummers, up there with Max Roach and Roy Haynes. Whatever the context — South African jive, jazz, free music — Moholo finds rhythm, explores rhythm, allows rhythm its own say, letting it live, breathe and speak.

After leaving his native South Africa with the Blue Notes (Chris McGregor, piano; Dudu Pukwana, saxophone; Mongezi Feza, trumpet; Johnny Dyani, bass) in 1964, he quickly became a mainstay of the European free-jazz scene, playing in key groups with John Tchicai, Roswell Rudd, Archie Shepp, Steve Lacy, Peter Brötzmann, Mike Osborne, Keith Tippett and Irene Schweizer, amongst others. He also detected the heartbeat in more obtuse musical environments with Evan Parker, Derek Bailey and other free improvisers, confounding the dogma that free music is somehow arrhythmic. On the contrary, more than any other drummer or percussionist, Moholo shows us that it is all rhythm, that there is no contradiction between freedom and the pulse, between the sky and the earth.

Today he leads his own group, Vusa La Black, featuring Saan Bergin, Steve Williamson and Tebe Lipere amongst others, and we've recently heard him playing with Cecil Taylor in Taylor's momentous Live In Berlin ("Cecil is so exuberant . . . I love Cecil"). He also hopes to soon achieve a long-held ambition to play with Ornette Coleman.

Louis is the only surviving member of the Blue Notes; Mongezi Feza died in 1975, Johnny Dyani in 1986, while last year saw the sad deaths of both Chris McGregor and Dudu Pukwana. At present Louis is preparing a tribute CD for Ogun dedicated to all the Blue Notes which will feature contributions from Evan Parker, Dave

Holland and Keith Tippett amongst others. He is also working on a new Vusa La Black album and a solo project.

I asked him to share some memories with me, beginning with his childhood in South Africa . . .

A H N O! My name is this, I was born by the river, you want me to start like that? You want me to do all that stuff?

OK, I was born in South Africa in 1940, on 10 March, under the heat I was born. And I come from a no-good country, in terms of laws, a very fucked-up country indeed. That's why I split in the first place.

But before I tell you about that, let me tell you about how I started playing drums. It was just from being a kid, touching this and that, I got two sticks and started banging on the sink, and maybe some notes would come out; then scratching a ruler against the fence on the way back from school, maybe that would sound nice. I didn't know that this would be the beginning of my appreciating the notes that come out of a drum.

And in South Africa, the drum is the thing. It was banged all over the place, everywhere that you went some cats would be sitting there banging on the drums. There would be boy-scouts marching-bands coming down the street, and it used to fascinate me the way the cat on the big bass drum used to swing that thing and play, boom boom boom! It used to drive me crazy, you know?

We used to follow these boy-scouts bands until our mothers would come and gather us back because we were going too far



and we would come back crying. We'd get some sticks and things and try to imitate the boy-scouts. I would play on top of a tin can, just imitating the scouts, round and round the house, banging and making a lot of noise, like kids do. That's how I started, though I didn't realise that I had started.

I got into the boy-scouts and then I was near to those kettle drums, the real thing! Ha ha! I was there, playing those kettle drums. But they got taken away, because the scout-master said I was playing too much, I was *unruly*. . . . But I had tasted the real thing now, and I couldn't leave it – right up to now, I'm still on the case, still on it. This morning before you came I was banging away for two hours, *every day*. It keeps the doctor away!

That's how I started and from then on I just went on to play normal dancing stuff for ballrooms, Glenn Miller, Ellington. Then I left that for jazz combos and trios, and that just grew and grew. I played in many places in South Africa, I won a prize for my drumming, they were issuing little gold stars you know, ha ha! Oh man, you're a good drummer, have a little gold star, right on! So I gave it to my father, I don't know what happened to that. Dudu got one too, Mongs, and Chris too got one. I was tied for my prize with a drummer called Mr Eddie Mboza, who died in South Africa, a very, very good drummer. He played with the first Chris McGregor big band in South Africa. One day he didn't make the gig, this guy, and I deped for him and I never parted with Chris from then. This is about '61.

We were invited to play in a festival in Switzerland, and Dollar Brand invited us to come to a club where he was playing and we worked there and stayed in Zurich for one and a half years. And we came to England. We got out of South Africa to better ourselves, you know? And see the world. With *all the shit* that was happening, there was no space for *nobody* to do *anything* in South Africa. We have to come over, I mean, we were tired of it. I was working with Chris McGregor and Chris McGregor's a white cat. We were not supposed to play together, we were not supposed to be on the same bandstand with Chris, we were not supposed to play for white people. I mean, I was supposed to play places where *my noster* wouldn't be allowed to come in and hear me play. And they wouldn't only refuse her to come to my concerts, they would also beat her up maybe – so fucked up were those guys in South Africa at that time. And even now they are still like this.

So sometimes Chris McGregor would have to play behind a curtain, and vice versa, I would have to play behind a curtain if we got hired by some white cats. And Chris McGregor used to come to this place where we would drink some beer, in the Zulu quarters, but white people were not *allowed* in here; Chris would paint his face with black polish to come in there. You know, Chris was not even allowed to come into my village! For a long time white people were not allowed to come into black townships at all. And vice versa, we had to get papers to come into white areas. I was arrested a lot of times coming from a gig carrying my sticks home. I wasn't doing anything, but it was an offence just to *be* there, just to be walking in the street.

I had to walk seven miles home, because there are no buses or taxis going to my town and all the gigs were in white areas. And the police would pick me up and I'd be sent to pick potatoes. Straight from a gig to picking potatoes for three months!

And I was sold once, you know. I was *sold*! There was something happening in my township and this guy sent me to get a bottle of brandy in town, which was the only place you could get it. So I got this money, I walked into town and went into the bar and this guy asked me what I wanted and asked whether I was a coloured person or a black person – because there was no way black people could get liquor. So he said 'Come here', and ran a pen through my hair, like that, you see? And it stuck, so I had failed to be a coloured because they have hair that is closer to white people's hair. I failed and was slammed out.

As I was being chucked away from the bar some policemen came and arrested me, saying 'What were you doing in *there*' being a black, you see. So I was arrested and sentenced to four months for being in that house. But instead of just lying about in jail and cleaning up faces they sold us to the farmers to go and pick potatoes and they were making money out of us, we got a shilling a day. I did that for about two months.

WHEN WE came here I started hearing some other vibes. I was away from South Africa and away from the chains. I just wanted to be free, totally free, even in music. Free to shake away all the slavery, anything to do with slavery, being boxed in to places – one, two, three, four – and being told you must come in after four. I was just a rebel, completely a rebel. And then of course there were people like Evan Parker, whom I saw was also a rebel. From then on I just played free, I met John Tchicai, Steve Lacy, Peter Brötzmann. Me and John Stevens were actually the first drummers to play free music in Britain, if the truth be told, and then after that a lot of other cats came in, but we were the first.

Free music is *it* man, it's so beautiful. The word 'free' makes sense to me. I know that's what I want; freedom, let my people go. *Let my people go!* And that's interlinking with politics, they embrace each other. It's a cry from the inside, no inhibitions . . . And the colours are so beautiful, there's a cry, there's joy, a joyful noise, there's sadness, there's rain, there's winter, there's love . . . that's why it's beautiful.

We felt very welcomed in Britain. We didn't hold back, we didn't have airs and graces, we were just innocent guys coming from South Africa. And the people liked us. Dudu was liked all over the place, and Johnny Dyani; I mean, the charisma of these guys. And people who met Mongs would just fall apart, you know? We were just a likeable band – ask Mr Keith Tippert about it, ask Mr Evan Parker.

Not everybody liked us. We played at Ronnie Scott's Club but we *never* liked it. We had a misunderstanding with the manager. He started calling us *boys*, and we are not boys. In South Africa we are called boys. My father would be called a *boy* by a boy of about 12 years old just because he's white! At

Ronnie Scott's they would start going (affects public school accent) 'Well, you see, *boys* . . . one should do this, one shouldn't do that . . . OK *boys*? And I would go 'No no no, don't call us boys! I'd been through too hard a time to be called a boy in England.

So, we had to fight very hard here too, there was a lot of prejudice. I don't even want to say anything about it, but someone said I should use Brylcreem for my hair! Ben Webster said that. My hair was just natural black hair, I didn't put no Brylcreem in it, but he would, like, make a joke, 'Hey man, you should put some Brylcreem in your hair maan!'

Then me and Mongs asked him if we could sit in with him and he asked us where we were from, we said South Africa and he couldn't believe we could play *anything*, because maybe we were from the jungle. He goes, 'You come from South Africa, my man? No, come tomorrow'. And we *did* come tomorrow because we were that serious, *desperate*. Then after two weeks he gave us a break, Mongs played so beautiful . . . and Ben Webster *adopted* Mongs after that. Right there on the bandstand, he goes, 'Man, you're my son!' He wanted to go through it all, legally and everything, *really*, ask . . . I was just going to say, 'Ask Johnny', I was just going to say 'Ask Johnny' man . . . In the end it was just a verbal contract, 'Okay, I'm your son'.

When Stuff Smith died we were consoling Ben Webster, he came to us - me, Mongs, Johnny and Dudu - he was crying and we looked after him for one day. We gave him respect, the respect that we came with from South Africa, he was our father, and he liked us for that, he liked us. He used to look after us very well, Ben . . .

#### Do you ever regret leaving South Africa?

I sometimes think that if the music had been explained to me, what it would do to me in my life, this heavy duty demand it makes, I don't think I would ever be interested, now that I know what music can do to a person. I like music, but the life . . . if I could be born again and know that I'm going to come to be in exile, then no way, because exile is a fucker.

Sometimes, a lot of times, I heard Dudu say that he would have preferred the difficulties of South Africa than to deal with the music over here. Because in South Africa, although there was the oppression and all that, we still played *innocently*, we didn't know who the bank manager was! Over here you have to deal with him, and VAT and all that shit. In South Africa at least the music was yours, and the people of South Africa, they recognise that if you are gifted in something, in anything, then you *are* that, and you are *named* that. You are respected, and just innocently too, no big deal, not because you have a million pounds in the bank; you are just the village drummer who makes his people happy. I would be called *Louis Who Plays The Drums*, my surname would be *Drums*. And here?

Here? It's just another crazy drummer, isn't it? Here there are so many other things, forces which have *nothing* to do with life. But I thank God that I came here anyway, you know, because

at least there's one South African drummer who knows how to play free music, to play avant-garde. Because in my early days I thought I didn't want to have anything to do with avant-garde, free music or jazz; I wanted to pay my rent, and it didn't pay my rent so well!

#### Could you talk about the Blue Notes?

I thank God for having met up with these guys. Like Dudu, this guy was a *ton* of music, you know? Mr Dudu Pukwana, he used to compose about four songs a day, even in the hardship of South Africa, and he practised *every* day. Dudu was just the pillar of the Blue Notes. Dudu the blessed light, he was special.

And Mongs was the *darling* really, the sweetheart of the band. Everyone loved him, Mongs would knock us out, everybody! Then in South Africa we had this other guy called Nick Moyake, Nick was the older guy to us, and we respected him, he had more knowledge of music - indigenous music, music of the heart. He was just music and he pulled us together in terms of strength. Everybody had a part to play.

Then, of course, Johnny - every song that we played Johnny would cream it and make it so beautiful. Johnny was so musical, anything he did was . . . he was kind of like a godsend for us, he had some magic about him. And we knew from the start, when he was a young boy with a singing band and I was playing drums backing them, he was such a fantastic singer - singing the high notes with such ease. Then he switched from alto-singing to bass-playing, and he played it so well. He just fitted like a glove, he was in the same vibe as us, and he put the music of the Blue Notes where it was at. He was a gift from heaven.

Then Chris. We would naturally get into songs, we would take them lightly, like kindergarten songs, and Chris, maybe typically of a Westerner, would leave no stone unturned and he saw the gold, which we didn't because we were in the gold. He saw this beautiful music, and did something about it. He organised it, put it into perspective from his musical knowledge. So we had everything in there. Chris was very broad-minded, a very, very clever cat. In the end he was very proud of us, and we were very proud of him, secretly.

Now this is a secret, but we were very proud of each other, and we really kicked each other's ass. And we were so together too; if anybody said, 'practise', under no circumstances were we to refuse. We did not play games with each other, we did not play buddy-buddy, even though we were buddies. If I fucked up Dudu would just go, 'You fuck off man!' No buddy-buddy. If I'm out of line or wrong, there was no bullshit.

We were strict and really very concentrated on this music. It was like something very urgent we had to do, and our first record was called *Very Urgent*. It was just like a flower that burst open.

What happened to the band when you all split off to do your own things?

We came to understand that blood is thicker than water. Even

continued on page 44



harmonia mundi

*Jazz*



**PAUL BLEY & GARY PEACOCK:**  
Partners CD: OWL LC058

"Particularly notable is the bassist's work: a glorious sound, a great technique and the ability to concentrate ideas around a central point of reference in solo work as well as get right into Bley's mind in the duets. ... About Bley's own work it becomes difficult to find words, but even superlatives don't convey the intensity of thought and choice that goes into his music."  
Jack Cooke - Wire, February 1991

enja



Now available on CD:  
**ERIC DOLPHY with BENNY BAILEY, PEPS AUER, GEORGE JOYNER & BUSTER SMITH:**  
Berlin Concerts CD: 3007/9-2  
Over 70 minutes of exciting music from outstanding live performances in Berlin, August 1961.

*TLF*



**KICK feat. BILLY COBHAM & WOLFGANG SCHMID:** No Filters  
CD: 888809

**MUSIC & ARTS**



**MARILYN CRISPELL:** Live In San Francisco. Recorded at New Langton Arts, October 20, 1985 CD: 633

enja



**TONY REESDY with GARY THOMAS, DAVE HOLLAND & STEVE NELSON:** Incognito  
CD: 6058-2

**GREETJE BIJMA:** Tales Of A Voice CD: 888808

The event of the Berlin Jazz Festival displays her six-octave range to cover varied musical styles.

*TLF*



**BIGFOOD feat. BILL BICKFORD, KIM CLARKE & BRUCE DITMAS:**  
Semi-Precious Metal  
CD: 888114  
Former Defunkt guitarist & bassist team up here with a master percussionist to produce avant garde funk with a metal edge and bebop aesthetics.

**TUTU**



Now available on CD:  
**MIKE WESTBROOK, KATE WESTBROOK & CHRIS BISCOE:**  
Love For Sale  
CD: ARTCD 6061

*nat*



MOERS MUSIC PRESENTS

**ODEAN POPE**



**OUT FOR A WALK**

Moers Music 02072 CD only

**ODEAN POPE**

tenor saxophone + voice

**Gerald Veasley**

4-string electric bass

**Cornell Rochester**  
drums

Germany

Moers Music, Postfach 300 120, W-4134 Moers 3  
Telephone (0) 28 41 / 7741, Fax (0) 28 41 / 7 62 92

Great Britain

John Jack - Cadillac Distribution  
London/England, Phone 01 835 38 46

MOERS MUSIC PRESENTS

**ODEAN POPE**  
**TOUR '91**

14. Mai - 15. Juni 91

Odean Pope, ts+voc

Gerald Veasley, bass - Cornell Rochester, dr

Booking and informations

**MOERS MUSIC**

P.O. Box 300 120, W-4134 Moers 3, Germany  
Phone (0) 28 41 / 7741, Fax (0) 28 41 / 7 62 92

For further information please contact:  
Harmonia Mundi Jazz, 19/21 Nite Street, London N1 7LP.  
Tel: 071-253 0663. Fax: 071 253 3237

# subscribe!

. . . and the night will belong to you



The cover price is up but the subscription remains the same. So there's even more reason to take out a year's worth of **Wire**.

You want more? Very well, esteemed ones. If you're a fledgling first-time subscriber to the world's most discerning jazz and new music magazine, you can collect a free CD from the brand-new Night Records catalogue. Through the kind auspices of Night, the label that's promising to release a front-rank run of previously-unheard sessions from many masters of the music, we can offer the choice of one of four splendid new releases, as reviewed in **Wire** 84.

Make your selection from one of these four:

**Rahsaan Roland Kirk** *The Man Who Cried Fire*

*Flute toots, titanic tenor and blues blazz from the lamented giant.*

**Cannonball Adderley** *Radio Nights*

*Sizzling live sessions by Cannon 'n' Nat.*

**Les McCann** *Les Is More*

*Not only Les, but also Roberta Flack, Terence, Gerald Albright . . .*

**Eddie Harris** *A Tale Of Two Cities*

*Crackjack club intensity from electric sax wizard.*

This is what you do: fill in the subscription form with this issue; write **Roland**, **Eddie**, **Les** or **Cannon** on the back, depending on your choice of record; send it to us, with a cheque or credit card number. A CD will follow as soon as possible (but **please** allow time for the discs to be ordered up and sent!).

*Offer available to first-time subscribers only – and it closes on 22 March 1991, so hurry!*

wire. don't be afraid of the dark.

## Books in Review

Jonathan Coe's jazz-in-fiction survey

clash with a look at Czech writer Josef Škvorecký, author of *The Bass Saxophone*

"LIKE A revelation, jazz, that strange way of making music, entered my life. It is the only revelation I have ever experienced."

Thus wrote Josef Škvorecký in the early 1980s, looking back on a long, multi-faceted and still very active writing career in which perhaps the major achievement is a series of linked novels, each featuring his fictional alter ego, Danny Smiricki. All of these books – *The Cowards*, *The Tank Corps* (as yet untranslated), *The Bass Saxophone*, *The Miracle Game*, *The Swell Season* and *The Engineer Of Human Souls* – concern jazz to a greater or lesser degree, and to follow the music through this entire sequence, tracing its shift in meaning as Danny metamorphoses from subversive youngster to nostalgic academic-in-exile, is to come up against a complex of attitudes very different from that which has traditionally informed the work of Western writers of "jazz fiction".

Although he has lived in Canada since the Soviet invasion of 1968, Škvorecký was born in Czechoslovakia, in the provincial town of Náchod, to which for the purposes of the Smiricki stories he has given the invented name of Kostelec. It was here, during what he came to see as the halcyon days of the liberal Masaryk regime of the 1930s, that Škvorecký got his first taste of jazz – or, to be more accurate, swing: the musical points of reference in all his novels are almost exclusively to records of the early swing era, and particularly to his favourite band, the Chick Webb Orchestra in its final incarnation, fronted by the teenage Ella Fitzgerald. On two different occasions, in fact, he has the Webb/Fitzgerald recording of "I've Got A Guy" bringing down the wrath of the authorities in Nazi-occupied Kostelec. In *The Engineer Of Human Souls* the incident is supposed to take place at an ice rink, where the record is played by mistake, confiscated and finally returned: but in the meantime it has been smashed to pieces, either "out of malice, or perhaps for ideological reasons, which is almost the same thing". In *The Bass Saxophone* the same event is transposed to a movie theatre, and the – again inadvertent – playing of the song just before the screening of a propaganda film prompts the monstrous Horst Hermann Kühl to storm into the projection room. "What is this supposed to mean?" he had rasped like a poisonous fire-

cracker. "This is a provocation!"

To understand why it should be seen as a provocation, and why Smiricki/Škvorecký's passion should within a few years have come to seem unacceptable, we have only to look at an amazing Decalogue of musical prohibitions, issued by the Nazi authorities during their occupation of Czechoslovakia and quoted by Škvorecký (from memory) in his essay "Red Music". Referring to jazz by the newly-coined epithet "Judeo-Negroid music", these regulations were binding on all dance orchestras and left little room for manoeuvre: "so-called jazz compositions may contain at most 10% syncopation; the remainder must consist of a natural legato movement devoid of the hysterical rhythmic reverses characteristic of the music of the barbarian races and conducive to dark instincts alien to the German people (so-called riffs)", "also prohibited are so-called drum breaks longer than half a bar in four-quarter beat (except in stylized military marches)", "preference is to be given to compositions in a major key and to lyrics expressing joy in life rather than Jewishly gloomy lyrics", etc.

THE NAZIS had been gone for 13 years by the time Škvorecký's first novel, *The Cowards*, was published, but it nevertheless fell foul of the censors of "an entirely different dictatorship". Party officials were outraged by this slangy, episodic account of the momentous events of May 1945, told by a narrator who feels sympathy for the defeated Germans and is more interested in playing the sax and chatting up women than in celebrating the heroics of the Red Army. But Škvorecký denied that his aim was to "insult the revolution": his response to it is, of course, far more complicated than that, and a brief consideration of the musical references is as good a way as any of teasing it out. Note, for instance, the narrator's feelings when he tunes in to a broadcast on 5 May, the morning of the Prague uprising: "The radio came on. Music. I listened, but it wasn't German music. Some march by Kmoch. I should have known they wouldn't have come up with anything better than some dumb oompah Kmoch. What a revolution! I listened disgustedly to the tinny music. It spoiled my good mood."

This can simply be taken, amusingly

enough, as the petulant moan of a hard-to-please teenager. But to the musically sensitive Danny, that very choice of a rhythmically unyielding march is also a foretaste of doom, a subliminal warning that one form of ideological rigidity is soon to be replaced by another.

NUMEROUS ACCOUNTS have been given of the symbolic function of jazz in Škvorecký's novels (voice of anti-authoritarianism, expression of individual liberty, etc) but at the most basic level it can be seen as an index of all that is human, supple and unpredictable as opposed to ideological, uniform and regimented. There's an overtone of youthful sexuality about it which he clearly finds attractive – and which he celebrates, in the later books, with a slightly overbearing nostalgia – but above all, growing up in a world where the stifling of imaginative impulses was a matter of official policy, Škvorecký seems to have been drawn to this music by its very quickness and unfamiliarity. A visual image of this is provided by Danny's delighted encounter with two bizarre musical instruments; in *The Swell Season*, written late in the series but chronologically placed as a kind of prequel to *The Cowards*, he comes across a flutophone in a shop window and is entranced by its "strange, longing whistle". More importantly, it's an unusual instrument which forms the centrepiece of Škvorecký's best and best-known work of fiction, *The Bass Saxophone*.

This 50-page novella was written in "the frenzy of three ecstatic days", prompted, apparently, by some lines from Ezra Pound: "What thou lovest well remains, the rest is drudgery/What thou lo'st well shall not be right from thee/What thou lo'st well is thy true heritage". The story is simple enough. Smiricki catches a glimpse of "the immense, incredible bell of a bass saxophone, as big around as a wash-basin", as a German musician carries it up to his hotel room. Having struck up a conversation with him, Danny is eventually asked to sit in with his band that evening. Unthinkable, needless to say, for a Czech to be seen playing with a German orchestra during the occupation, so he has to disguise himself. He stumbles his way through a few numbers, but is then pulled off stage by the real bass saxophonist, who resumes his rightful place,



"squeezing the blinded body that was like the neck of a brontosaurus" so that "huge sobs poured out of the corpus, roars thousands of millions of years old". As Danny stands listening, half horrified and half enraptured, he is unmasked by a German official and thrown out of the dance hall.

Škvorčák's prose here is quite different from that of the longer works, where his informal, throwaway style can lose some of its bite in translation and dissolve into diffidence. In *The Bass Saxophone* he uses huge, lumbering sentences which not only echo the unwieldy grace of the horn itself, but are spliced by labyrinthine parentheses and sub-clauses which bear witness to the entanglement of the story's two themes: music and politics. It's here that he makes his most honest and convoluted statement of a belief in music as the "faith which cancels ideologies". The clumsy, well-intentioned efforts of the disguised Danny and his German band carry a meaning which has nothing to do with their musical merits, so that even for Horst Hermann Kuhl, the watchful Nazi, "our ramshackle expression of bliss became the backdrop for a tiny, weary craving for some Bavarian or Prussian town, for *Lederboas*, for the warm world of an insignificant home where he wouldn't have to live in a five-room suite in an apartment house on the main street, with the Fuhrer on an altar".

In this way *The Bass Saxophone* becomes something which most Western jazz fiction rarely has the courage to be: a celebration of the ramshackle, the insignificant. Danny knows that, for all his ambition, his musical home will always be "on the move with Lothar Kinze's orchestra... on the mournful routes of Europe's periphery", and it's this realisation which will lead him finally to exile, to a breezier and less problematic existence in the West, where there need be no check on his nostalgia for "that sad, beautiful music called swing" and the life that went with it.

*The Cowards* is published by Penguin. *The Bass Saxophone*, *The Swirl Sistine* and *The Engineer Of Human Souls* are published by Picador. Three of Škvorčák's essays on jazz, including "Red Music", can be found in the collection *Talkies Moscow Blues*, published by Faber - who have also just brought out (in hardback) the first English translation of *The Miracle Game*.

## PRINT RUN



Brian Priestley sings along with two new books on Duke Ellington

WHEN YOU think about it, the number of jazz books which discuss the sound of the actual music in any meaningful detail is small. And the number which focus that discussion with notated musical examples is even smaller.

Apart from introductory histories of jazz, whose quotations are necessarily cursory, you could mention Ian Carr's *Miles*, my *Mingus*, the Coltrane biography by Bill Cole (who barely seemed to understand what he was talking about), and Gunther Schuller's *Early Jazz* and *The Swing Era*. Even in these, only a minority of the pieces discussed are granted any transcription so, by basing all their musical discussion on printed examples, both *Duke Ellington: The Early Years* by Michael Tucker (Bayou Press, £25) and *Duke Ellington: Jazz Companion* by Ken Rattenbury (Yale University Press, £22.50) are breaking new ground.

Of course, they all laughed - even Ellington enthusiasts - when Tucker announced he was working on a biography which would end with Duke arriving at the Cotton Club in December 1927. Naturally, not all Tucker's work is musicological and, indeed, on a conventional biographical level he has done an extremely thorough job. Piecing together what little was in previous books about Ellington's Washington background, Tucker has cross-checked newspaper references, spoken to survivors and offspring, and distilled the true flavour of black musical society of the period.

On the musical front, both illustrations and comments are even more impressive. For a start, there is more than might have been expected and, beginning with the legendary "Soda Fountain Rag", Tucker identifies four pieces from the time before Ellington's first (1924) recordings of his own material, quoting and analysing them. As with later items (up to and including the great early trio of "East St Louis Toodle-Oh", "Black And Tan Fantasy" and "Creole Love Call"), he is particularly clear-sighted about what themes and phrases were borrowed from other sources. But he also knows what contribution

Duke made in assembling them and in the arrangement of their presentation. In short, what manner of 'composer' he was.

To be sure, his achievements even at the close of this chapter of his career were dwarfed by what happened in the next 45 years, but most of what needs to be understood about his subsequent work is elucidated by this study (would-be biographers and James Lincoln Collier, please note). In fact, it might not be too much to hope that Tucker has enough years in him to tackle Ellington's entire output in a series of books of this quality.

Rattenbury's volume also restricts its contents and, apart from the appendices, devotes all of its space to musical analysis. The central part is its discussion of five varied pieces from what's considered Duke's peak period of 1940-41, namely "Ko Ko", "Concerto For Coote", the piano/bass duet "Mr J B Blues" and the sepiet items "Subtle Slough" (fronted by Rex Stewart) and "Junior Hop" (Johnny Hodges). And it's not just analysis with the occasional section of music notated: the words are accompanied by a complete score, or rather transcription, of each piece. While I can pick the odd hole in these transcriptions, they are an invaluable part of the book's virtues.

Textually, the pity is that this is all too obviously a thesis, with some of the writing almost impenetrable except by academic supervisors and examiners. Unnecessary too, when we get yet another explanation of the blues scale and the blues sequence (can you imagine a thesis on European music defining a major scale or a cadence?) and lengthy descriptions of the rhythmic features of ragtime. Rattenbury is good on Ellington's organic use of these factors, even providing an appendix of statistical findings, and he is especially good on the characteristics of Duke's brass players and their integral incorporation of mutes.

Both of these volumes should be warmly welcomed, especially as the only other book attempting this kind of detailed assessment is the still-to-be-published work of the late Eddie Lambert. That may or may not include such incidental pleasures as Tucker's deadpan reprinting of early misprints such as "Duke Yellington", "Lake Ellington" and even "Bruce Ellington". What if one had stuck?

## STUDY JAZZ AT THE ROYAL CONSERVATORY WHERE YOUR INTERNATIONAL JAZZ CAREER BEGINS

JAZZ DEPARTMENT

The Jazz department of the Royal Conservatory counts over one hundred students. The full program for the Performing Artist Diploma lasts six years. For foreign students who have completed a study in their own country it is possible to obtain the Certificate Jazz within two years. The Jazz department of the Royal Conservatory is international by nature. Aside from the regular program students study and give performances with the top players of the jazz world. The jazz department has good contacts with the North Sea Jazz Festival, The Delta Jazz Concerts and The International Association of Jazz Schools.

**Guest teachers** ▶ Michael Brecker ▶ John Scofield ▶ Peter Erskine ▶ Eliane Elias ▶ John Patitucci ▶ Tom Harrell ▶ Mark Murphy ▶ Jiggs Whigham ▶ Dave Weckl, etc. etc.

### Artist in Residence Project

▶ Barry Harris, master of bebop piano, 4-7 March 1991

▶ Pat Metheny, virtuoso of jazz guitar, 25-27 March 1991. The Royal Conservatory is the only institute in Europe that participates in Pat Metheny's educational world tour. Ask for the brochures about these lessons and concerts. Please call ...31 70 381 42 51.

**North Sea Jazz Festival** ▶ The Big Band Royal Conservatory performs at the main stage conducted by a.a. Bob Brookmeyer, Rob McConnell, Bill Holman.

**Information** ▶ Ask for the General Brochure and the Study Guide Jazz with detailed information on teachers, study programs, entrance exams, financial matters, housing, study facilities, demo studios, performing spaces, etc.

▶ Please call ...31 70 381 42 51; or ▶ fax ...31 70 385 39 41; or ▶ write Royal Conservatory / Jazz Studies, Juliana van Stolberglaan 1, 2595 CA Den Haag, Holland.

Visit us at the **OPEN DAY March 15th** and see the Jazz School with the best equipment in Europe.

## THE ARTS COUNCIL OF GREAT BRITAIN

1990/91

### COMPOSERS BURSARY SCHEME

The Arts Council is offering a limited amount of money for the support of individual composers who are creating new music work. Bursary awards are intended to help such composers who should be of professional status and who intend to carry out work in England. The scheme is not open to full-time students nor is it intended for the purchase of equipment.

With the help of the 1990/91 Composers Bursary Scheme, there were six bursary winners who received awards ranging from £2,000 to £5,000. This allowed for various projects to be undertaken, including one for the composition of a music theatre work and another which enabled the composer to write a symphonic piece.

Further information and application forms are available from:

John Muir, Music Officer, Arts Council of Great Britain,  
14 Great Peter Street, London SW1P 3NQ.

A stamped, self-addressed envelope must be enclosed.

Completed application forms should be returned by 12 April 1991.

The Arts Council has an Equal Opportunities Recruitment Policy. It warmly welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

Arts Council

## A CAREER IN MUSICAL INSTRUMENT REPAIR

Study for the City and Guilds  
Advanced Craft Certificate

FULL TIME AT

### MERTON COLLEGE

Learn the art of musical instrument repair and restoration in a range of specialised subjects.

PART TIME DAY AND EVENING COURSES ALSO AVAILABLE.

FOR AN APPOINTMENT TO VISIT OUR WORKSHOPS  
OR FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

PHIL CHAMBERS TEL 081-542-3981

OR WRITE TO: MERTON COLLEGE, RUTLISH ROAD,  
MERTON PARK, SW19 3AL

## DARTINGTON INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL

JAZZ/IMPROVISATION/ELECTRONIC MUSIC  
COMPOSITION/MUSIC THEATRE

27 JULY TO 24 AUGUST 1991

KEITH TIPPETT, JULIE TIPPETT, LEWIS RILEY, BOW GAMELAN,  
JAVIER ALVAREZ, IAN DEARDEN, WILFRED JOSEPHS,  
VINKO GLOBOKAR, DOMINIC MULDOWNEY, ION ENSEMBLE,  
BALANESCU STRING QUARTET AND MORE.

Open to all - Applications also invited for  
MAJOR SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES

Information from:

Marcus Davey, Dartington International Summer School,  
Dartington Hall, Totnes, Devon TQ9 6EJ  
Tel: (0803) 867068 Fax: (0803) 863569

# the charts

Every month on this page, a selection of informative, contentious and plain opinionated statistics from the extraordinary orbit of the world's jazz and new music magazine. Why not send us **your** own current playlist?

## ten late-lamented outposts of improvisation

1. London Jazzhaus
2. The Little Theatre
3. Music Magazine
4. Bethnal Green Library
5. LMC, Gloucester Avenue
6. Jazz Cafe I
7. Studio Rivbea
8. The Old Place
9. The Golden Circle
10. Impetus Magazine

Compiled by The Free Was Non

## improvisation: best-sellers

1. **Hall Of Mirrors** Evan Parker & Walter Pratt (MM&T)
2. **Harmos** JJC (Inakr)
3. **The Ericle Of Dolphi** Paul Lovens, Evan Parker, Paul Rutherford, Dave Holland (Po Torch)
4. **Machine Gun** Peter Brötzmann (FMP)
5. **Supersession** Barry Guy, Evan Parker, Eddie Prevost, Keith Rowe (Matchless)
6. **Looking (Berlin Version)** The Fall Trio (FMP)
7. **No Wave Revolution Music Ensemble** (Moers)
8. **Viva! La Black** Lassi Mahala (Ogun)
9. **Many Bobbing Heads At Last** Merry Fogel (CMP)
10. **Scratches Of Spain** Billy Jenkins (Silice)

Chart courtesy of Hazel Miller at Castellan Distribution, 180 Shaftesbury Ave, London

WC2H 6JB

## eight records claudio magnani would like to buy in the 90s

1. **Weather Report** Plays Duke Ellington (Columbia) Produced by Joe Zawinul & Delfino Marsalis
2. **Ray Charles** Sings The Songs Of Randy Newman (Atlantic 2LP) Produced by Jerry Wexler
3. **Dr. John** The Return Of The Original Voodoo Man (Atco) Produced by Daniel Lanois
4. **The Hank Mobley Memorial Quartet** featuring John Zorn, Wayne Horvitz, Ray Drummond and Bobby Previte *Uk Hub* (Black Saint) Produced by Giovanni Bonandini
5. **Jimi Hendrix** The Acoustic Sessions (Reprise) Produced by Jack Douglas
6. **Aaron Neville** The Stephen Foster Songbook (Antilles) Produced by Hal Willner
7. **Donald Fagen** Bright Lights, Big City, The Blues According To Donald Fagen (WB) Produced by Gary Katz
8. **Lowell George** The Last Blue Sea Studios Sessions (WB) Produced by Elizabeth George, Van Dyke Parks and Russ Titelman

Sent in by subscriber and soprano soprano Claudio Magnani from Italy



THIS MONTH *Hardwire* downs plecrum and reed-cutter to switch its attention from your instrument to what, as far as I'm concerned, you can do with it. And you could do worse than take it along to one of the many jazz and new music summer schools which still very near-

ly abound in the UK even in these iffy times.

Summer schools are enormously diverse in their approach and can be demanding or easy, long or short, residential or non-residential, intensive or relaxed, idyllic or funky, inexpensive or costly – although complaints about poor value, as such, are rare. What follows, then, is only the barest information. Course organisers will supply full details on request.

This list doesn't pretend to be comprehensive but any other courses we get wind of will be mentioned in future issues, so please let's hear from any other organisers offering courses in jazz, new composition, electro-acoustic music or any other *Wire-type* stuff, whether in the UK or abroad.

**Dartington International Summer School of Music**, Dartington Hall, Totnes, Devon TQ9 6EJ (0803 867068). 27 July–24 August. Long-established and well-respected, with a star-studded list of tutors. Courses include electroacoustic composition (Javier Alvarez, Ian Dearden), environmental music theatre (Murray Schafer), Balinese gamelan and an instrumental course run by Keith Tippett.

**Wavendon Courses**, The Stables, Wavendon, Milton Keynes, Bucks MK17 8LT (0908 582522). Courses from February to late August. Another mainstay of the scene and also star-studded. Courses include the famous Allmusic Easier Course which incorporates jazz (John Dankworth and Scott Seroman *inter alia*), a rhythm section weekend (John Horler, Jeff Clyne, Trevor Tomkins, Phil Lee) plus two summer jazz courses with a variety of tutors (directed by Clyne and Tomkins).

**Guildhall Summer School**, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Barbican, London EC2Y 8DT (071 628 2571). Various jazz courses (directed by Scott Seroman) late July/early August, including a new course on jazz education for teachers.

**Jazz Academy**, Regents College, Regents Park, London NW1 4NS (071 487 7501). 17–24 August. Directed by pianist Michael Garrick. Musicianship and jazz history. The course includes provision for string players.

**Goldsmiths' College Spring and Summer Short Courses**, Department of Continuing and Community Education, Goldsmiths' College, University of London, Lewisham Way, New Cross, London SE14 6NW (081 692 7171 ext 2300). A large array of courses during this period, including a big band weekend, jazz improvisation for singers, the songs of George Gershwin and other items of

interest such as a course on scoring software.



OH ALL right then, one token bit of plasticmongery this month. I want to get this one in before the stock runs out. Having been disparaging about the use of sequencers in jazz-related music in the past and on reflection regretted it (given that musicians with styles as diverse as

John Surman and Vince Mendoza are wont to use them), there's one particular item available at the moment which will be of interest to anyone owning a keyboard equipped with MIDI in and out but who always thought sequencing was either (a) silly, (b) boring, (c) too complicated, (d) too expensive or (e) contrary to the spirit of the music, whatever that means.

The Seiko (yes, them) MR1000 sequencer is available at a mere £39 only from The Music Corporation, Link Mall, the Dolphin Centre, Poole, Dorset BH15 1SQ (or phone them on 0202 684560 with a Visa or Access number). Here's why you should buy one: firstly, it will handle a maximum of 5000 notes (but costs a lot less, har har) and is usable across all 16 MIDI channels – instant live arranging if your keyboard is multi-timbral or if you're self-indulgent enough to own several MIDI keyboards or modules. Secondly, the MR1000 is entirely self-contained and hardware based – no disks (although you can digitally store your sequences on cassette), RAM packs or PC, just a neat black box with four buttons and one slider. Thirdly, it's incredibly simple to operate because it dispenses with all those sequencer features which were always counter-intuitive to musicians with responsive, interactive, improvisational habits.

So such 'shortcomings' as the absence of a step-time mode (loading in the notes in a long string and then loading their individual lengths in a separate operation – zzzzzz . . .), quantising ('tidying' your timekeeping after recording your sequence so that every note is exactly on the beat – people actually *do* this, you know) and punching in (going back through your recorded sequence to correct errors) are evident in the MK1000's spec, but so what?

And finally, presumably because these traits have made it less than desirable to the mainstream sequencer user, The Music Corporation (and only them) are knocking them out at this immoderately cheap price. At less than £40 the facility has to be worthwhile, say for working out parts by ear or for producing backing tracks for your blistering solos, or even just to find out a little more about the process. Buy one for any of these reasons, or just for fun.

Incidentally, for the frustrated saxophonists among you, The Music Corporation are also selling the silly-looking but not entirely ineffective Casio DH-800 digital horn for £69 – as easy to play as a recorder and highly therapeutic.



Dean Benedetti, founder of rare Charlie Parker sales, now raised on Miami and retired from music. Photo by Rick Benedetti



**Soundcheck:** *March comes crashing in,*

*with Charlie The Bird,*

*Mr Blood,*

*Berry Bebob,*

**Naked Zoro**

*& the Post-Missive Sax*

*Plus plenitudes of pianists – Crispall! Malford! Schlöppenhach! Schweizer!*



# CHARLIE PARKER

\*

## *The Complete Dean Benedetti Recordings Of Charlie Parker*

Mosaic MDT-129 7 CD/18 LP

A total of 278 tracks, including 461 recordings of Charlie Parker and a small number of Dean Benedetti. Principal collective personnel includes Miles Davis, Howard McGhee (s), Charlie Parker (as); Hampton Hawes, Duke Jordan (p); Addison Farmer, Tommy Potter (b); Roy Porter, Max Roach (d); Earl Coleman (v). Mostly recorded in Los Angeles, March 1947 and New York, March-July 1948.

PRIMITIVE RECORDINGS always have a ghostly quality to them, their imperfections almost as significant to the ear as the sounds they were meant to record: to listen to Mapleson's cylinders, or the wheezing discs of ancient ragtime, or Oliver's Creole Jazz Band, is to try and focus on music hidden behind a wall of distraction. It's like peering at old masters through a film of accumulated varnish. Yet the 'interference' can be like the veneer on antique wood: an authenticating crust, a sense of time past that has its own mystery. Dean Benedetti's archives of Charlie Parker, which are boy's probable equivalent to the Dead Sea Scrolls, may be frustrating in their erratic fidelity, the music frequently disguised by a tide of noise, but the detritus of neglect attaches a peculiar spell to the sound that comes through. We hear Parker as if in legend, never quite corporeal, vivid yet remote.

With most musicians, the tribulations of getting past Benedetti's poor resources would scarcely seem worth it. Parker, though, always cuts through, just as he does on the other airshots and private recordings which have added so much to our understanding of him. At various times on these records he sounds like a man at the far end of a ballroom, someone broadcasting on short-wave radio in a snowstorm and a busker playing in the midst of a gun battle. But he always sounds like Bird: and in any case, many of the recorded snippets offer surprisingly good sound, something of a restoration miracle by the engineers from Benedetti's collection of discs and tapes (the first myth the set explodes is the one about the wire recorder - he never used one).

You probably know something about

Dean Benedetti. He was an Italian-American alto saxophonist, one of the many musicians who were transfixed by the new music of Parker and Gillespie, and there are a few fragments of Dean's own playing included in the set. His obsession with Bird went beyond the norm: in order to study Parker better, he decided to make his own recordings. He used a portable disc recorder at first, later a tape recorder; he captured Bird in LA, then in New York; but whatever the benefits of his private researches, he never put them to much professional use, since he became involved with narcotics himself, drifted off the scene and returned to his parents' hometown of Susansville. He died in 1957 from a rare muscle disease. His brother Rick looked after the precious discs before passing them on to Mosaic.



Two years of intense work has resulted in this sumptuous presentation: seven CDs or ten LPs, bolstered by Phil Schaap's extraordinarily detailed listening research. As a feat of jazz scholarship and archaeology, nobody's ever topped this. Although some of the major tracks have been out before, particularly on the Debut album *Bird On 52nd Street* (still available as OJC-114), everything here is as complete and as cogently identified and grouped as this music could ever be. Literally every second that could be salvaged has been: some of the tracks last two or three seconds each.

No question about the historical magnitude of what there is here. The issue to raise is whether one is able to set history aside and settle back and enjoy hearing Bird. Parker's legacy has traditionally been a chaotic one: of

all the major jazz figures, his recordings have been the hardest to sift and evaluate. Thanks to Schaap and a few others, the Parker canon has been brilliantly clarified in recent years, with the Dial, Savoy, Verve, Royal Roost and now these recordings made accessible and complete.

Of them all, though, these are the hardest to come to terms with. Aside from the sound quality, there is the fragmentation: although much of the later New York material features near-complete performances, the majority of the archive is composed of pieces of Parker, hewed out of their settings by Benedetti's eagerness to concentrate on Bird. Most of the Los Angeles tracks with Howard McGhee eclipse the other players: Parker is tracked in isolation, Dean lifting the needle after the great man stops blowing. The later sides are easier to handle, and Mosaic have done their utmost to segue in a logical fashion, splicing together chippings of different versions of the same tune to muster coherence; grouping tracks in sections which make the best sense. But these hundreds of miniatures can often rumble past, leaving all but the most attentive listeners free-falling through the maze of Parker's licks. There are, for instance, 42 numbered tracks on the first CD, which offers 60-odd minutes of music; one sequence of 17 pieces includes nothing over two minutes in length. It's like hearing Parker samples flung out of an old memory bank.

After a while, the ear adjusts to this momentum, and one starts to hear as Benedetti must have done: you don't really regret that the other stuff is missing or curtailed, because it's Bird that you want to hear. As strong as the New York group is - and here was one of the definitive, original big bands playing at its deadliest - the solo interludes by Davis and the others create impatience for Parker's return.

The Parker we hear is as dumbfounding as he ever was in front of microphones. Even in shattered pieces, Parker's mercurial imagination and Olympian strength abide through all the hiss and cut-up stops and starts. When you get to a tiny piece such as the minute-and-a-half of 'Chasin' The Bird' recorded at The Onyx, blemished by an erratic crackle, but blessed by an astounding spurt of creative energy, you can feel the intensity of effort that it must have taken to restore this material - as well as Parker's own



driving of himself, and Dean Benedetti's pursuit of taking down every note. Just playing these discs (on perfect, deathless CD!) participates in one of the most relentless, profound expeditions in jazz, on both a creative and a documentary level.

It needs a full-length article to deal with such other issues as the variations in Parker's night-to-night creativity; the fresh light thrown on some of his companions, especially Davis and Roach; the revelations about 52nd Street sets; the guest shots by several musicians including Monk on "Well You Needn't"; the choice of Bird's material, including Coleman Hawkins tunes and some surprising standards; and more. Much of this is covered in the superbly annotated booklet that comes with the records; Mosaic and Schaap have put us in their debt again.

As strong as Parker's presence is, there's an equally large shadow cast by Dean Benedetti himself. He unconsciously shaped all this music — nearly seven hours of it — for generations that are already distant from Bird and his era. If he was an amateur recordist, he knew what he wanted, and he did his best to get it in as good a quality that he could. Mosaic give him equal billing with Bird: a fine and necessary gesture.

RICHARD COOK

## MARILYN CRISPELL



### Live In San Francisco

Music & Arts 433 CD

*Penetration, Zephyrus, When I Fall In Love, Ruby, My Dear, Misconception, Transit, Dear Lord, Encore*  
Marilyn Crispell (p). Rec. 20 October 1989.



written across all the music.

That is as true of her interpretations of work by other hands as it is of her own compositions. She does not so much play standards like "When I Fall In Love" or the Monk classic "Ruby, My Dear" as reinvents them, teasing out little snippets and oblique references to the theme as she goes; her eventual arrival at a first statement of it in the closing bars does not simply introduce a sense of completion, but refers the listener back to its ghostly presence, both implicitly and explicitly there all along.

The massive energy of her music has been much remarked upon, and if neither of these sets is quite as densely compacted or as intricately constructed as her earlier Leo Set *Gato*, they may well provide an easier entry point to her work. Both emphasise the

growing lyricism also felt by Taylor in her playing, but with no real loss of either that energy or the sure sense of purpose and shape which she brings to even the most abstract improvisations.

Listen, for example, to the way in which both she and the group build from Motian's delicately pattering filigree of drum strokes behind the pianist's chant in the opening section of "Areas/Solstice", expanding the music in all directions for almost 14 minutes of hugely inventive improvisation, before suddenly taking off at a new and equally rigorously explored tangent with the introduction of a jaunty, Monk-ish theme.

This is music-making of a very high order indeed, guaranteed to lift the spirits as well as satisfy the intellect. *Live In San Francisco* also includes samples of the pianist's work from two other Music & Arts CDs, *Vaniswaver Duets* with Anthony Braxton and *Images* by The Reggie Workman Ensemble; all four are indispensable listening.

KENNY MATHIESON

## UNIVERSAL CONGRESS OF



### The Sad And Tragic Demise Of Big Fine Hot Salty Black Wind

Enemy EM117 CD/LP

*Freight Train, Small World, Tight Heat, Bermuda Blues, Marginal, Almost Positive, UB Hub, Kyle's Theme, Elf's Chair Role, Pickled Bullhorn, The Man With The Woman* (4\* CD only)

Joe Batta (g, v), Steve Moss (s), Bob Fitzner (b), Paul Lines (d), Elliott Sharp (g). Rec. August 1990.

## JAMES BLOOD ULMER EXPERIENCE



### The Blues Alright

In - Out 7065 CD/LP

*Blues Alright, Calling Mary, Peace And Happiness, She Ain't So Cold, Changing Times, Baby Snatcher, Boss Machine, I Don't Know Why*  
James Blood Ulmer (g, v), Ronnie Drayton (g, v), Winnie Layh (ky, v), Amin Ali (b, v), Grant Calvin Weston (d, v). Rec. May 1989.

UNIVERSAL CONGRESS Of operate like a rock band: excellent artwork, a spirited lack of apology, commitment to stance and song,

The first time I heard Marilyn Crispell play live (with the Anthony Braxton Quartet in London) was almost as overwhelming an experience as an introductory exposure to



**PAUL BLEY,  
JIMMY GIUFFRÉ,  
STEVE SWALLOW**

*The Life Of A Trio: Saturday*  
Owl 659 CD

*Clarinet Zone; Black Ivory; Owl Eyes; Endless Melody; Turn; Forplay; We Agree; Clusters; December; Someone, Even Stoner; By The Way.*  
Paul Bley (ph), Jimmy Giuffrè (ss, cl), Steve Swallow (b). Rec. 16 December 1989.

*The Life Of A Trio: Sunday*  
Owl 660 CD

*Savory; Monique; The Gutter And The Black Stick; Industrial Sate; Sanctuary Very Much; Tango Del Mar; The Hidden Voice; Alpbach; When Were We?;*



*Sweet Song; Scrambled Legs; Play Ball; Fallen Statue; Things; Two Singers; The Life Of A Trio.*  
Personnel as above. Rec. 17 December 1989.

In 1963 Jimmy Giuffrè was virtually run out of Jazzville for the heinous crime of originality. His offence: to play totally improvised, abstract, drummerless music. His accomplices: Paul Bley and Steve Swallow. His sentence: no recordings at all for the next ten years, and only a handful in the subsequent 18.

*The Life Of A Trio* marks the first time these guys have recorded together in nearly three decades; the first, in fact, since their revolutionary 1963 LP *Free Fall*, after which (in Giuffrè's words) "the doors closed". So the clarinet cry which opens "Clarinet Zone" is both a victory-shout and, in its uncanny

clarity of purpose. Like Tupelo Chain Sex and the Office Ladies (who also originate from LA) and Pinski Zoo and the Shuffle Demons (who do not) they open up electric beat music to free jazz – and swing like a mother.

UCO's covers (Shannon Jackson's "Small World", Henry Threadgill's "Bermuda Blues", Odean Pope's "Kyle's Theme") evince excellent taste, but you need to hear leader Joe Baiza's guitar to appreciate how ferociously good they are. Half way between Blood Ulmer's harmonolodics and Billy Jenkins's punk zippings, his notes have the challenging outness that makes Eric Dolphy's contributions to inside music so scintillating. Elliott Sharp's crazy lapsreel meshes beautifully on "The Man With The Woman" (one of his two guest tracks).

Baiza knows how to make his rhythm guitar riff like a Basic horn section ("Ell's Choir Robe"): "Pickled Bullhorn" excavates the roots of rock 'n' roll in big band swing. The playing is more restrained than previous releases on SST (*Prosperous & Qualified* with its outrageous cover of Blood Ulmer's "High Time" and the Ornette-tribute *Metabolica*) but the fluidity and freshness are outstanding. Paul Lines's drums have the generous slack precision of top-level drumming. Bob Fitzer's bass is fleet and efficient in a delightfully understated way. Punk integrity with free jazz imagination. Fantastic!

It is a case of the pupils outstripping the teacher. Having delivered a masterpiece with *Elder Jazz* on DIW, Blood Ulmer appears to have run out of steam. The usual demonic clutter of the rhythms and the no wave discord have been replaced by tame, muffled funk and three-chord-trick tunes out of the Velvets/Stones songbook. Ulmer's voice still has his patent half-asleep giant's power, but the words are resolutely banal – this from the man who aspired to Hendrix's political mantle on *America!* To hear evocations of the latter's ecstatic guitarism over such tired grooves is frustrating and depressing. Wannabe Leyh's sub-Prince synth superimpositions do nothing to help.

*The Tragic Demus* has more of the essence of Ulmer's undoubted genius than this shoddily packaged (courtesy "The Bad Mr Ulf!") and carelessly recorded attempt to woo the mainstream. This month, buy Baiza!

BEN WATSON

echoing of the cry which opened *Free Fall*, an assertion of continuity. The conversation begins anew.

Or, at first, the monologues. These two CDs follow the solos/duos/trios format of *Free Fall* but the solos are clustered on the *Saturday* CD, the trios on the *Sunday* (final totals being six solos/three duos/three trios to three solos/seven duos/six trios). This hint that the players perhaps used the earlier session to reattune to each other is borne out by a second statistic – the second CD has an extra 20 minutes of music (66'19 to 45'37) – but also, more pertinently, by the music itself. On *Saturday*, sometimes, it doesn't really happen: there is a feeling of minds moving in parallel, but no sparks, no leaps of understanding, to ignite a true intimacy. On *Sunday* that extra frisson is suddenly there, minds co-mingle, the music starts to crystallize.

Time has brought gains and losses. The players have a surer touch, a freight of experience not available in 1963; but after *Vibrations*, *Sound and Axiomatic*, the kind of subtle chamber improv explored (albeit rigorously) on *The Life Of A Trio* hardly threatens the ancient gods of Swing and Chord Change the way it did in the early 60s. But don't dismiss this as rocking-chair and carpet-slipper stuff – minds are still sharp, emotions glow, nerve-ends tingle; the bottom line is flint-hard, the exchanges born from a steely disregard for nostalgia or indulgence. This unassuming music has substance enough to outlast its temporary sidelining by the fashion for noise.

Even so, *The Life Of A Trio* will probably endure as an acquired taste. You can't relax with these spacy winter meditations as you can with Giuffrè's more sensuously textured records for Soul Note. Brief, austere, cognitive, these tracks do have their incidental pleasures – a dark bluish of clarinet here, a delicate tangle of keys there – but at their core is an implacable devotion to the abstract which may deter the less diligent listener. Still, the rewards are worth digging in for: you won't often hear such freedom allied to such discipline, such firm purpose in consort with such attention to nuance. Not, indeed, such a welcome tale of reunion against-the-odds.

Incidentally, Owl CDs are not so hard to find as Jack Cooke surmised in his review of





the Paul Bley/Gary Peacock *Partners* last month. But if your local record shop doesn't have them in stock, they can easily be ordered for you from Owl's UK distributors, Harmonia Mundi at 19-21 Nile St, London N1 7LR.

GRAHAM LOCK

## STEVE REICH



### *The Four Sections*

Elektra Nonesuch 7559-79229 LP/CD

*The Four Sections*, Music For Mallet Instruments, Voices And Organ.  
Edmund Niemann (p), Nurie Tillis (p, org), Reich, Bob Becker, Russell Harenburger, Gary Kvistad, James Prias, Tim Ferchen, Thad Wheeler (perc); Pamela Wood Ambush, Rebecca Armstrong, Jay Clayton (v); The London Symphony Orchestra, cond Michael Tilson Thomas. Collective personnel. Rec: November 1988.

THIS NEW item from Steve Reich is guaranteed to challenge the expectations of both his supporters and his detractors, which is probably a good idea. "The Four Sections", composed at the suggestion of Michael Tilson Thomas and completed in 1987, is effectively Reich in reverse.

Reich's relatively recent widespread popularity, which seemed to reach its peak with the release of *Different Trains*, is probably due to the simple point that his music is easy enough to listen to but also, as is the nature of systemic music, implicitly conveys its own means of construction in performance. This, in combination with Reich's sensitively employed instrumentation, allows the elements in a Reich composition to interlock elegantly and euphoniously.

However, "The Four Sections" (cunningly titled to fool short-sighted Vivaldi lovers?) has much more to do with exposure than interconnection. Reich's one-time collaborator Mike Oldfield (yes, that one, and yes, it's true) was apparently reluctant to let the son-of-Tubular-Bells album *Hergest Ridge* appear without a certain quantity of attention-holding devices grafted into the piece's musical structure. Given the opportunity to later remix the album he left out several of the interlocking melodic lines, resulting in a spare, understated mix which was apparently closer to his original inten-

tion. In a not dissimilar move, "The Four Sections" sees Reich laying bare his structural methods in an unusually rarified atmosphere. The first three of the four movements foreground in turn one instrumental section of the orchestra; strings, percussion and (taking a slight liberty) winds, in that order. The fourth and final movement involves the entire orchestra and reiterates and to an extent reinterprets the harmonic structure of the first three movements - and, coincidentally, returns us to the Reich we know.

"The Four Sections" is a strange beast; to listen to it is like suddenly being exposed to the inner workings of a complex mechanism the functions of which had always been taken for granted; as if, for example, you suddenly knew exactly how your watch worked. And it's a process which only takes as long as the



piece itself, which is also odd. Reichians hoping for a frisson of recognition will either have to get used to the idea that the man's moving on or take the easy option and skip to the second track.

"Music For Mallet Instruments, Voices And Organ" is an earlier piece with all the earmarks of classic Reich and closer to the kind of music which appears on the ECM recordings which you probably already own. The composition is both lively and rigorous and is in itself a welcome addition to the Reich discography. The contrast between the two pieces, however, borders on the unsettling: if this serves to rescue Reich from appropriation by the soppy end of the New Age market, then it'll all be worth it in the end.

TOM CORBIN

## BETTY CARTER



### *Droppin' Things*

Verve 843 991 CD/LP

*30 Years, Standstill/Memories Of You/What's The Use Of Worrying; Open The Door, Droppin' Things; I Love Marc; Why Hare, Dull Day (In Chicago).*  
Carter (v); Freddie Hubbard (tr); Craig Handy (ts); Marc Cary, Geri Allen (p); Tulus Mateen (b); Gregory Hutchinson (d). Collective personnel. Rec: 26-27 May and 7 June 1990.



### *Jazzbabe Berlin '85*

Vol 1: Betty Carter & Her Trio

Repertoire RR 4691 CD

*One Finger Snap; What A Little Moonlight Can Do, The Man I Love; With No Words, Corbin Saw; Every Day I Have A Year; My Favourite Things; Every Time We Say Good Bye, Sand.*  
Carter (v); Bennie Green (p); Tarik Sha (b); Lewis Nash (d). Rec: 22 June 1985.

WITHOUT A doubt Betty Carter's best albums have been recorded live. On her crowning achievement, *The Audience With Betty Carter* (Verve/BerCat), one of the finest jazz vocal albums of all time, the audience even get equal billing such was the galvanising effect they had on her performance. It's a relief therefore that *Droppin' Things*, her long-awaited follow-up to the 1988 studio session *Look What I Got*, was recorded live at New York's Bottom Line. Included are three performances with her trio, as always a sharp, incisive and interactive unit as exemplified by the groove they generate on "30 Years". A Carter original with a lived-in feel, it deals with the tragedy of male dilettantism after 30 years of marriage. This is classic Carter, using her femininity to dislodge male chauvinism.

On the remaining four cuts they are joined by Hubbard and Handy, who are introduced on the largely instrumental blow, "Open The Door". On the title track, another Carter original, she is smart and alert, directing traffic and imposing sufficient peer pressure on Hubbard to ensure some excellent work whenever he steps into the solo spotlight. On "Why Him", at one of those painfully slow tempes Carter continually challenges herself with, Handy shows he has the maturity to "play" his silences, rare in young musicians, while Hubbard, who despite his foibles is

## GRP

GEORGE HOWARD/Love And Understanding  
GRD 9629 (CD) GR 9629 (LP) GRC 9629 (MC)  
Featuring: George Duke, Victor Bailey, Munyungo Jackson

## YELLOW JACKETS/Greenhouse

GRD 9630 (CD) GRC 9630 (MC)  
Featuring: Russell Ferrante, Jimmy Haslip, William Kennedy, Bob Mintzer

## VeraBra

TORSTEN DE WINKEL/Mastertouch  
VBR 20122 (CD) VBR 20121 (LP)  
Featuring: Billy Cobham, Alphonse Mouzon, Ernie Watts, Michael Brecker

## TORSTEN DE WINKEL & HELLMUT HATTLER/Humanimal Talk

VBR 20232 (CD) VBR 20231 (LP)  
Featuring: Nana Vasconcelos, David Wilczewski, Billy Ward

## Iniquition

MIKIS THEODORAKIS/Sings Theodorakis  
INT 30592 (CD) INT 30591 (LP) INT 30594 (MC)  
Featuring: Christian Bessell, Rainer Rohloff, Wolfgang Loos

## VINCE JONES/Trustworthy Little Sweethearts

INT 30462 (CD) int 30461 (LP) INT 30464 (MC)  
Featuring: Ray Persera, Tony Floyd, Lloyd Swainson

## MEZCLA/Fronteras de Sueños

INT 30472 (CD) INT 30471 (LP) INT 30474 (MC)  
Featuring: Pablo Menendez, Sonia Cornachet, Lucio Huerfano

## Club Rio

CHARLIE PALMIERI/A Giant Step  
66054001 (CD)  
With: Bobby Rodriguez, Mike Collazo, Johnny "Dandy" Rodriguez, Frank Malabe

## JOSE MANGUAL JR./Latin Rhythm & Moods

66054002 (CD)  
Featuring: Milton Cardona, Salvador Caeraz, Ray Gonzales Jr

## MONGO SANTAMARIA & HIS LATIN-JAZZ ORCHESTRA/

Espiritu Libre  
66054003 (CD)  
Featuring: Eddie J. Allen, Sam Furnace, Bob Quaranta

## Lipstick Records

FRANK NIMSGERN/Frank Nimgern  
890012 (CD) 890011 (LP) 890014 (MC)  
Featuring: Chaka Khan & Billy Cobham

## IDRIS MUHAMMAD/My Turn

890022 (CD) 890024 (MC) 890021 (LP)  
Featuring: Groves Washington Jr, Bob James, Hiram Bullock, Randy Brecker

## GARY MEEK/Gary Meek

890032 (CD) 890031 (LP) 890034 (MC)  
Featuring: Airto Moreira, Flora Purim, Jeff Lurie

## Messidor

PAQUITO D' RIVERA & ARTURO SANDOVAL/Reunion  
158052 (CD) 158051 (LP) 158054 (MC)  
Featuring: Dantle Perez, David Fink, Fared Haque

# New Note

## NEW NOTE DISTRIBUTION LIMITED

UNIT 2 ORPINGTON TRADING ESTATE SEVENOAKS WAY ST MARY CRAY ORPINGTON KENT BR5 3SR  
TELEPHONE (0689) 77884 FAX (0689) 77892

ASK YOUR DEALER TO ORDER FROM PINNACLE TELEPHONE (0689) 73144



**BASEMENT OF 9 BERWICK ST, SOHO, W1**  
(UNDERNEATH DADDY KOOL'S ON BERWICK ST. MARKET)

**UK PRICES FOR IMPORT CDs, LPs & CASSETTES**  
**OPEN FROM 10.30-7.00 MON-SAT**

**JUST IN: GRUPO FOLKLORICA, LIBRE, OLODUM,**  
**GRUPO NICHE, JAPANESE BLUE NOTES, BANDA BLACK RIO,**  
**PUENTE MAMBO JAZZ, NEW JOE ARROYO, MACHITO**

**SALSA, SAMBA, AFRICAN, JAZZ, BATUCADA, SOCA,**  
**CUMBIA, AFRO-CUBAN, FUSION**

**NEW COLLECTORS SECTION - RARITIES IN STOCK**  
**SECONDHAND LATIN AND JAZZ BOUGHT AND SOLD**

**THE LARGEST LATIN STOCKIST WITH OVER 60,000 TITLES**  
**CHECK OUT ANY TITLE ON THE PREMISES - 3 SETS OF HEADPHONES FOR CUSTOMERS USE**

**FURTHER INFORMATION TEL: 071-287 1887 FAX: 081-347 9236**  
**MAIL ORDER SERVICE: ALL LPs £7.49 + P&P; CDs £10.99 + P&P**

**(LARGE SAE FOR FULL LIST)**

## MOLE JAZZ

**291 PENTONVILLE ROAD**  
**LONDON N1 9NP**  
**TEL: 071 278 8623**  
**FAX: 071 833 1029**



**WE KEEP THE LARGEST STOCKS OF JAZZ/NEW MUSIC**  
**LPs/CDs/TAPES IN THE COUNTRY. WE ARE ALSO MAIL**  
**ORDER SPECIALISTS - UK AND WORLDWIDE. WE**  
**ACCEPT ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS. FOR A FREE COPY**  
**OF OUR LATEST MAIL ORDER LIST PLEASE SEND 30p**  
**STAMP TOGETHER WITH YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS**  
**(OVERSEAS 2 IRC's).**

**SEND FOR AUCTION LIST - 3000+ RARE ITEMS!**

**C O D A**  
**JAZZ**  
**PAST**  
**JAZZ**  
**PRESENT**  
**JAZZ**  
**FUTURE**  
**JAZZ**



## MAGAZINE

**SUBSCRIPTION FOR SIX**  
**ISSUES \$24 from CODA**  
**PUBLICATIONS, Box 87,**  
**Station J, Toronto, Ontario**  
**M4J 4X8 CANADA;**  
**£12.00 from Miss Rae**  
**Wittrick, 33 Winton Lodge,**  
**Imperial Avenue, Westcliff-**  
**On-Sea, Essex, England**  
**Single copy \$4.00 / £2.00**



one of the finest ballad performers in jazz, is secure and elegant. However, a return to the studio the following month for a ballad medley in duo with Geri Allen is not wholly successful in the context.

Just how much Carter's trios have been a remarkable, if largely unacknowledged, forcing house for talent is exemplified by her performance at the Berlin Jazzbühne in 1985. Here the pianist is the brilliant young Benny Green, now among the current roster of Blue Note artists. As at all Carter live performances, the trio go through their paces first and Green is featured on "One Finger Snap", his playing calm, assured and inventive. When Carter takes the stage, she opens with "What A Little Moonlight Can Do" in 11/4, immediately distancing herself from the melodic outline by her unique process of creative distortion and by taking the song through snappy tempo and metre changes that highlight her ability to arrange her material in new and highly original ways.

When Carter performs a song previously associated with another singer, as she does on "What A Little Moonlight" and "The Man I Love" (Billie Holiday) or "Every Time I Say Goodbye" (Ella Fitzgerald), her talent is so commanding she immediately wipes the memory clean of that which has gone before. While Holiday's and Fitzgerald's performances seemed to exhaust their material of any further meaning, so appearing to make the songs their own special property, Carter's versions are so completely original that they gleam with the lustre of fresh discovery.

Both albums are indispensable Carter. They reveal a little more of themselves with each playing, as does all great jazz. But while they are performances of a lady approaching her 60th year, there is no slackening of her resolve to appear at the peak of abilities every time she performs.

STUART NICHOLSON

## SCHLIPPENBACH TRIO

*Elf Bagatellen*  
FMP 77 CD

*Arno: Bialub's Tale; Revised, The Forge; Reel-  
lousd, Analogue; Sealed; Resurrection Of Yarak; K.K.  
Maxwell; Yarak: Reforged; Elster-Werde Nocturns;*

*Sun-Luck: Revisited; Boenst; Fax.*  
Evan Parker (ts, ss), Alexander von Schlippenbach  
(p), Paul Lovens (d). Rec: 27 May 1990.

ELEVEN BAGATELLES... modest title for a magnificent record that arrived too late for the capsule summary of FMP in February's *Wire* – a pity, for it would be hard to find a record that better underlines both the enduring validity of free jazz and the importance of group work.

The Schlippenbach Trio's been together for 20 years now, and the players know why. They've made a real language from the pooling of their highly individual talents and are extremely fluent in it. Live, as on the 1981 *Detto Fra Di Nol*, their music has often been a high-pressure fountain of sound. *Elf Bagatellen*, the group's first studio album



since *Pakistani Parade* (1972), doesn't lack for cascading intensities but it takes time to breathe too, pausing in its flow to consider some of the points these three musicians have touched along the way.

The record is in part a ported history, reflecting on music made within the context of the trio and inside the Globe Unity Orchestra. "Sun-Luck: Revisited", for example, takes us back to "Sun-Luck Night-Rain" on *Pakistani Parade*, a performance originally given identity by a rallying piano riff. On the "Revisited" version that riff is hinted at, unwound, and played back-to-front and upside-down: Schlippenbach and Parker seem to have it at all times in mind as reference material and never do frankly state it, but it's there as underlying structure. Similarly, through "Resurrection Of Yarak"

and "Yarak: Reforged" we meet again, or nearly, "Yarak", a theme traced on Schlippenbach's *Payan* solo album and on Globe Unity's *Live At Wuppertal* (1972 and 73 respectively), its second 'r' presumably lost in transit.

Particularly welcome is another sighting of "The Forge", which I've always considered the best thing on Globe Unity's 1979 *Compositives* album. This time the head arrangement, with its whiplashed rhythms, is played outright in the eighth minute by Schlippenbach, but the pathway to and from it is circuitous, the guys taking the scenic route, beginning with a marvellous ballad sequence.

Capping his other achievements, Parker has rather suddenly blossomed as a really strong melody player, sufficiently assured in his mastery of the alternative saxophone vocabulary to mix it freely with the horn's more conventional resources. This works to the benefit of both the straighter playing and the more idiosyncratic stuff, as if he's doubled his emotional reach – especially on tenor – and is now free, having made jazz history, to be quite forthright in drawing upon it. What he plays at the start of "The Forge" is as beautiful as Coltrane leaning into, say, "Song Of Praise".

Schlippenbach's spontaneous sense of form, meanwhile, seems more advanced than ever, the Monk-like rhythmic displacements early in "Resurrection Of Yarak" giving way to contrapuntal violence without any sense of a surrendering of control. There's a vice-like grip on the material. Lovens, of course, remains the group's textural poet, commenting calligraphically on the action. I used to wish he'd play something simple and central and primal sometimes. I got over it. The complexity of this music is undoubtedly part of its strength, a reason to return to it frequently.

STEVE LAKE

## GEORGE RUSSELL'S LIVING TIME ORCHESTRA

*The London Concert*  
Label Bleu LBLU 6572 CD/LP

*La Falsa, The Roccillo Variations, Uncommon Ground,*



*Electronic Sonata For Souls Loved By Nature* — Events XI–XV; *Later: To The Solstice: Acknowledgements; Struggle Of The Magicians; Six Aesthetic Gravities; So What*

Stuart Brooks, Ian Carr, Mark Chandler (t); Pete Boachill, Ashley Slater (rb), Andy Sheppard (ts, ss), Chris Bruce (as, ss), Pete Hurt (bs, n, bcl, f); Brad Hanfield, Steve Loader (ky), Bill Urmson (b); David Fluczynski (g); Steve Johns (d); Dave Adams (perc). Rec. 28–31 August 1989.

COMPOSER/THEORETICIAN George Russell's recorded output has suffered over the years. His Living Time Orchestras are convened, normally, during college vacation, when he emerges from his position as a faculty member of the New England Conservatory for a specific tour or club residency. The problem has been that either, in the case of his New York Big Band in the late 1970s, the band was stocked full of names but suffered from lack of rehearsal time, or, as with his last Living Time albums, it was a well-drilled student ensemble that lacked soloists of substance.

*The London Concert*, recorded live at Ronnie Scott's, falls between these two extremes. Star soloist Andy Sheppard packs a punch and consistently delivers throughout; the rhythm section is right on the money. Russell is a canny enough bandleader to know that if they're not together, then nobody is, and he brought key players familiar with his charts with him from the Conservatory. And while the ensemble isn't always inch-perfect they're far enough behind the rhythm section in the sound-mix so that the occasional imperfection lends a feeling of elemental rawness that's wholly in character with Russell's music.

However, Russell's compositions, a powerful duality of the primitive and the complex, do raise the issue of the much-touted claim that, since the death of Gil Evans, Russell is now the most important composer/orchestrator in jazz. Such claims, though, seem to rest more on past achievements, despite the inclusion here of three important commissions from 1988–9, "La Folax", "Uncommon Ground" and "Six Aesthetic Gravities".

"So What", a *Kind Of Blue* classic with the Davis solo transcribed by Goro Tanagerding as the theme, is, like all the Living Time's current repertoire, powered from below by layers of rock rhythm section patterns. It's

the foundation for deft modally-based compositions that gradually build, one chorus on another, with almost hypnotic intensity. And when, as on "Uncommon Ground", they finally rise and soar into a new tonality, Russell seems capable of moving the odd mountain or two. Certainly this visceral, pumping body-music achieves a balance between the emotional and the physical — the rap intro to "Electronic Souls" is the most extreme example — but its appeal to the intellect remains only tantalizing. The coda to "Electronic Souls", for example, was a cliché in the 1960s, never mind 30 years later. Surprising, as Russell has said the most important factor in making music is a balance between the emotional, the physical and the intellectual.

STUART NICHOLSON



BOBBY WATSON  
& HORIZON



Post Motown Bop

Blue Note 64-95148 LP/MC/CD

*The Pansy Of Java Po, Big Girls, Falling In Love With Love, Seventh Avenue, Appointment In Moscow, In Case You Missed It, In A Sentimental Mood, Slippin' & Shidin', Bah-Da-Do-Do-Dub-Dub, Last Chance To Groove.*

Melton Mustafi (t); Bobby Watson (as); Edward Simon (p); Carol Dashiell (b); Victor Lewis (d). Rec. No details.

STEVE NELSON QUINTET



Live Session Two

Red Records RR 123235 LP/CD

*The Song Is You, I Can't Get Satisfied, Sweet And Lovely, Quorum, This Time The Dream's On Me.* Bobby Watson (as); Steve Nelson (vb); Donald Brown (p); Curtis Lundy (b); Victor Lewis (d). Rec. July 1989.

IT REMAINS one of life's great mysteries to me why Bobby Watson is not vastly more popular than he is, while palpably inferior — although not necessarily bad — players like Chris Hunter, Christopher Hollyday, Rick Margitza or Kenny Garrett grab public attention. Watson will undoubtedly outlast most of his more faddish contemporaries and juniors, but he deserves our undivided attention now.

*Post-Motown Bop* is his third album for Blue Note, a major label association the player himself hoped would help boost his status. Despite the title, he has resisted the temptation (or pressure) to aim at the kind of crossover market targeted for label-mates like Margitza, Don Grolnick, or even Michel Petruccianni; this is a pure jazz album, and a superb one.

Watson's own playing continues to be a model of style and invention, juggling tried attributes like toad beauty and an acute melodic and harmonic sense with unflinching taste and judgement, although his ongoing work with the 29th Street Saxophone Quartet now reveals a more unorthodox facet to his music which is only occasionally in evidence here.

Any track will do equally well as a demonstration of that prowess, whether up-tempo or ballad, in bright unison or superbly unfolding solo statements. This is no one-man band, though; he has surrounded himself with a group of entirely comparable musicians, with drummer Victor Lewis and trumpeter Melton Mustafi particularly outstanding, and the music they make is genuinely an ensemble sound, tightly-knit and in complete empathy.

Whether any of this makes much impact in the market-place remains to be seen, but faced with this level of creative music-making, arguments about revivalism against originality seem simply irrelevant.

The saxophonist and drummer also acquit themselves with distinction on Steve Nelson's session, but the music lacks the spark of whatever it is that lifts Watson's own music out of the simply excellent category. The vibes man is a pleasing player, and fronts a



strong band, but the resulting gig ultimately lacks the shape and sense of purpose of *Post-Mortem Bop*. Then again, it is not alone in that.

KENNY MATHIESON

# ELLIOTT SHARP/CARBON



## Datacide

Enemy EM 116 LP/CD

*Fraser Frame; D-Cipher; Nest Of Saws; Quack; Kijpale; Inter; Agury; Chapter 11; Eyes Right; Dr. Adler; Conditos; Punt & Shout; Unki; X-Talk; Just Cause; Gipsybot; Just Another Day's Work; Anise.* Sharp (g-b, s, steel g, slab, samples, v); Zeena Puskins (e harp, ky, slab); Sammi Bennett (perc, d, samples); David Linton (d). Rec: no date.

# TAKASHI KAZAMAKI & KALLE LAAR



## Return To Street Level

Ear-Rational 1022 CD

*Musmole; I Was Living; In My Rehearsal; Room; With; Dead Phasent; In The Backyard; And Angry; Neighbors; At My Duesing; Who; Buenos Friends; Greek Businessmen; Trying; To Keep Their Children; Asleep; So I Turned; Down; My Ang; Again; In The Middle; Of The Night; In The House; Where; People; Were Not; Supposed; To Live; Anyway.* Elliott Sharp (g, bcl, v); Paul Hoskin (cbcl); Nick Didkovsky (g); Kalle Laar (g, electronics); Tom Cora (clo); Kazumaki (perc); Christian Marley (turntables). Rec: June 1990.

# JIN HI KIM



## Sargeng

Ear-Rational 1022 CD

*Sargeng; Struts; Kow Chai; Chai; Can 'N' Go; Sargshuang; Yala Delta; Sam Jung Joe; Magenta; Hot Potato; Shellgame; Paste; Return March; Waterlock; Fringes; Frog Inside Wall.* Elliott Sharp (g, b, s, computer-manipulated samples); Henry Kaiser (g); Jin Hi Kim (komungo, chango). Rec: no date.

It's PROBABLY a little lazy to simply bundle these together as a bunch of CDs which feature Elliott Sharp in various capacities, as this will only reinforce the notion of a vaguely homogenous New York weird-music-from-the-Lower-East-Side scene. In fact, these three recordings are much more

indicative of the stylistic diversity which seems to be the cornerstone of this non-school's virality.

Carbon are a long-established unit, carbon-datable back to 1981. This incarnation produces a slightly unusual variation on the likeable arty grindcore which Sharp's projects tend to revolve around.

When the first wave of noisy-clever bands such as Airway began to appear on record much was made of the implication that instruments and studios were means by which human-generated music could be transformed into something else entirely. Carbon seem to have brought the idea full circle, resulting in a music which has seemingly been systematically wrecked by a combination of signal processing and the thrash aesthetic, except that bits of the debris

aesthetic which is highly attractive. And, as you'll have noticed, the titles string together into a Tom Pickardesque poemlet which is dippy but excusable.

The final album in the clutch is less successful if equally worthy in conception. The komungo is thoughtfully explained in the sleeve notes as "a fourth century Korean six-string board zither played by striking the strings with a bamboo stick". Despite Jin Hi Kim's explicit espousal of "cross-cultural composition and improvisation", her collaborators seem a little less sure of themselves, seemingly overwhelmed and wary by turns as they attempt to accommodate the entire musical history of a prodigious civilisation into a series of pieces which largely seem to consist of three musicians trying very hard to stay out of each other's way. This gives the music a slightly jarring fits-and-starts quality which detracts somewhat from an otherwise imaginative instrumental combination.

TOM CORBIN



# MYRA Melford



## Jump

Enemy EP/CD 115 CD/LP

*Jump; Some Kind Of Blues; Frank Lloyd Wright Goes West To Rest; The World Wears Away; See On The Sound; Once Again; Only In Change.* Myra Melford (p); Lindsey Horner (b); Reggie Nicholson (d). Rec: June 1990.

Melford COMES out of the Mid-West and is part of that New York grouping which might be characterised as the Knitting-(Factory)-Circle. But that's about as much of a style guide as saying somebody once worked on 52nd Street. Actually, the technically accomplished Melford, backed by a bassist who is also very able and a drummer who is notably discreet, rolls up quite specific elements of the past 30 years or so of piano jazz into highly competent and often quite complex performances. There's tradition in the clearly-defined compositional bases - though these are not 'song'-based. And frequently the improvising doesn't stay close to home: yet, nevertheless, there's a strong sense of form throughout what might at times seem like inconsistency of content.

contemporary  
music

## CAPRICORN

sounds from the steppes

These works by prominent contemporary Russian composers highlight the changing international political climate. The pieces performed are by classical composers of earlier in the century as well as by current composers who are gaining ever-increasing recognition. The music of Alfred Schnittke was suppressed for years in the Soviet Union, but now receives widespread worldwide acclaim; several concert series have been devoted to his music, which is performed and admired by such major artists as Mikhail Rostropovich and Yehudi Menuhin, who premiered Schnittke's *Viola Concerto* at the BBC. *Primo Sofia Gubaidulina's* *Mantra* to T. S. Eliot takes its text from Eliot's *Four Quartets*. It was awarded the *Koninklijke Internationale Reizend Award* in 1993.

Linx Hall Thursday 28th February 8.00pm Tel 0743 30763  
Queen Elizabeth Hall Friday 1st March 7.45pm Tel 071 928 8800  
The Gate Hall, University of Nottingham Monday 6th March  
7.30pm Tel 0602 484848 ext 2097  
Royal Northern College of Music Friday 8th March 7.30pm  
Tel 061 273 4504 / credit card bookings 061 273 3334  
Middleton Hall, University of Hull Saturday 9th March 7.30pm  
Tel 0482 226229  
Adrian Beale Hall Sunday 10th March 7.30pm Tel 021 236 3829  
Trevor Sme Concert Hall Tuesday 12th March 8.00pm  
Tel 0703 671771  
Pleasure Hall Friday 12th March 7.30pm Tel 051 709 3789

## WILLEM BREUKER KOLLEKTIEF

The ten-piece Dutch band applies its inimitable blend of skill and wit to original tunes as well as every musical genre imaginable, and brings its irreverent personality to music by Weill, Gershwin and Ellington. The Kollektief "saves jazz to electrify audiences, reducing them to helpless laughter and standing ovations" - *Wire*. The Willem Breuker Kollektief has recently appeared at the Glasgow, Bath, and North Sea Jazz Festivals, and performed at all-Weill passages at the 1990 Almeida Festival.

Queen Elizabeth Hall Thursday 14th March 7.45pm  
Tel 071 928 8800  
Teater Club Friday 15th March 8.00pm Tel 0532 742486  
Haymarket Theatre Sunday 17th March 7.30pm Tel 0533 539797  
Royal Northern College of Music Wednesday 20th March 7.30pm  
Tel 061 273 4504 / credit card bookings 061 273 3334  
Adrian Beale Hall Thursday 21st March 7.30pm Tel 021 236 3829  
Sheldene Theatre Friday 22nd March 8.00pm Tel 0865 864056  
Theatre Royal Sunday 24th March 8.00pm Tel 0232 250250  
Boswell Theatre Monday 25th March 8.00pm Tel 0392 421111  
Wildf Theatre, South Hill Park Tuesday 26th March 8.00pm  
Tel 0344 484123

Contemporary Music Network  
Arti Conci'd  
14 Great Peter Street London SW1P 3NQ  
Tel 071 333 6100

## The Whittingham Awards

### for Popular Music or Jazz

These awards have been established in memory of Peter Whittingham who admired the work of George Gershwin, Cole Porter, Jerome Kern, Marvin Hamlisch, Stephen Sondheim, George Shearing, Art Tatum and Oscar Peterson.

## 1991 Award £4,000

Open to individuals of any age for projects in the creation, performance, teaching, research or study of music in the above idiom.

Last date for receipt of entries: 3rd April 1991.

For free information leaflet and application form please send SAE to:  
The Trusts Administrator, Whittingham Awards,  
16 Ogle Street, London W1P 7LG.  
Tel: 071-636 4481.

## WHERE MUSIC meets TECHNOLOGY

When music began to give technology a starring role, musicians needed information - *Music Technology* set out to provide it. For the last nine years MT has been the only musicians' magazine to accurately guide the musician through the hi-tech jungle without allowing the equipment to eclipse the music. Today, MT provides reviews of the latest gear, features guiding its application and interviews with the wide variety of musicians using it.

## MUSIC TECHNOLOGY

Looking at technology with the musician in mind: looking at music with technology in perspective.

Music Technology: £1.60 monthly from good newsagents or call (0353) 665577 for details.



Thus the title track gets off to a rather stately, somewhat ominous start before settling to a steady groove before the notes start flying like Cecil Taylor at practice. In contrast, "The World Wears Away", by bassist Horner and the only line not written by Melford, is essentially reflective and developed in a flowing style. It's also a noticeable contrast with "Sun On The Sound", which is again relatively light in tone but then becomes more sharp-edged, developing into piled-up irritations; it's not reflective so much as refractive. "Once Again" in an oblique way recalls Bill Evans, whilst "Only In Change" is clear and simple, churchily melodic with that economical lilt that Horace Parlan at his best could do better than almost anybody. Finest of the lot, though, is for me "Some Kind Of Blues", in which Melford declares some variations on the misery that are quite lustrous and developed at considerable length with great restraint.

There's something else here too: almost a feeling of patience finally rewarded, technique honed over the years, material accumulated steadily (some of it was copyrighted in 1986) and now finally available to a wider audience. Even though it's a first album, there's no element of uncertainty that sometimes accompanies a 'debut'. It does raise the question of how you prepare a follow-up, but that's not at issue here. Right now, it's roll 'em, Myra!

JACK COOKE

## DICK HECKSTALL-SMITH



WOZA NASU

Aura Records AU 737 CD

*Woza Nasu; A Knife In Whoneed-sya?; Koblers; Where One Is; Giant; Twelve; Dripnote Restaurant; Il Cinghiale.*

Heckstall-Smith (ss, ts, bs); Alan Weekes, Malcolm Bruce (g); Claude Deppa (t); Ed Jones (tr); Ashley Slater (tbn); Dave Moore (kp); Ike Leo, Paul Rogers (b); Kenrick Rowe, Frank Tomash, Julian Bahula, Pete Brown, Jim Drummond (d); Tina Lyle (perc). Collective personnel. Rec: 1990.

*WOZA NASU* is Dick Heckstall-Smith's first solo instrumental album, and the first session of any kind he has led since 1972. Considering that Heckstall-Smith's blend of Sonny

Rollins's wayward phrasing, Rahsaan Roland Kirk's multi-horn effects and his own fierce walking-on-the-bar blues raunchiness has made him one of the most unusual of all British saxophonists, it's a bizarre oversight. Heckstall-Smith semi-retired from the road to the academic life around the mid 70s but has latterly been back with DHSS (including the young saxophonist Ed Jones) and rubbing in these considerable virtues for the benefit of audiences not born when he first climbed into the back of a Transit. *Woza Nasu* has been, as they say, worth waiting for.

The eight tracks take in a mid-tempo groove with Africa written all over it ("Woza Nasu"), hard bop ("A Knife In Whoneed-sya?"), Crusaders-like funk, Miles-like funk, plush ballads, arty 70s-style jazz-rock ("Giant") and some beautiful slow blues



tenor ("Il Cinghiale"). The musicians, largely drawn from Britain's young jazz scene – the Warriors' Alan Weekes plays guitar on all the tracks – play in various combinations of small groups, and the range of material largely avoids the contemporary trap of simply being an eclectic trawl. The integrating factor is Heckstall-Smith's own presence, both as a soloist and as the sensibility through which this immense variety of music has been reprocessed over the years. His own sound on the title track, a thick, heavy, tantalisingly drawn-out theme statement turning into a multi-horn choir, and his mixture of slow, nearly Coleman Hawkins-like flurries on "Il Cinghiale" resolving in high squeaks bordering on Evan Parker's territory, are worth the disc, but there's a great deal else besides.

Not just the record long-time Heckstall fans would have hoped for, but a vivid, urgent, genuinely open-minded contemporary jazz album in its own right.

JOHN FORDHAM

## IRENE SCHWEIZER



Piano Solo Vol 1

Intakt 020 CD

*Versehen; Irritation & Variation; The Ballad Of The Sad Cafe; Wo Ist Mein Hund?; Backlash; Stomping At The Church; Melancholy Single Blues; Look-In; Look-Out; Polka; Dots & Stringbeans; Weso; Broken Nose; ... Endlich; Talking Frog; Blauer Muzaka.*

Irene Schweizer (p). Rec: 23/24 May 1990.



Piano Solo Vol 2

Intakt 021 CD

*Sisterhood Of Spit; Fox-Trottel; All Alone, Serious Hanging-Out; Shredded Shaffle; Creeping Walts; Chirchchilis; ... Ausserdem Und Andererseits Und Auserhalb; Ask Me Now.*

Irene Schweizer (p). Rec: 25 May 1990.

SOME LINER notes would have helped here. Apparently, Irene Schweizer spent two days in an old church in Boswil, Switzerland by herself (*Vol 1*) and on the third day invited an audience in (*Vol 2*), a large audience by the sound of it.

With the exception of Irving Berlin's "All Alone" and Monk's "Ask Me Now", the material is all Schweizer's and apparently improvised, although the reappearance of melodic fragments and ideas from *Vol 1* on *Vol 2* might indicate otherwise. Presumably, the improvisational process threw up ideas worth further development. "Stomping At The Church" and "Serious Hanging Out", once the latter gets moving, offer similar jerky rhythms and mysterious non-pianistic bashing about. "Serious . . .", in its second half, also seems to be related to "My Favourite Things". There are (unconscious?) echoes of McCoy elsewhere, too, as on the excellent "Melancholy Single Blues", driven with a heavy bassline not too far away from "Fly With The Wind".

In general, the pieces are disciplined, very cleanly articulated, and obliged to stay in



line. Patterns are at a premium, there's often a suggestion of *musique mélangée* gone slightly askew and I have tried hard to think of Conlon Nancarrow at such moments rather than cuckoo clocks. The generous/indulgent Taylor-ish sprawl of *Wild Sensitivity*, Schweizer's 1976 solo album, belongs to the long-gone past. Vol 1's 15 short tracks will not daunt even the easily-daunted. The question is: are these concise structures really interesting? Answer: not always. "Look-In", for example, is an arpeggiated *non-nothing*. You could play it yourself, reader. And "Talking Frog", "Polka, Dots" and "Wo Ist Mein Hund?" almost make one wish Henry Cowell had never struck a darned egg inside a grand piano 60 or so years ago.

Much more positively, "The Ballad Of The Sad Cafe" is pretty and wistful in a Paul Bley/Ran Blake kind of way and conveys a lonesome atmosphere in the spirit of McCuller's novel. Though the "Ballad" is the best thing on either set, I prefer Vol 2, overall, which begins with a rousing tribute to Pukwana and McGregor. (It should be pointed out that Schweizer also paid tribute to Dudu when he was alive.) A very solid performance of "All Alone" is another highlight. "Shredded Shuffle" is just what it says, Pete Johnson diced.

All told there's about 105 minutes of music on these two CDs which I think could have been boiled down to about 70 without too much pain: there are good things here but you have to pick your way over selections not worth saving.

STEVE LAKE

## JON LLOYD QUARTET



### Szyzygy

Leo Records LR 173 CD

*Couple-ets*, *Metzli* 94, *Fragments* 92 & 93, 90; *Cycling*.

Jon Lloyd (ss, as), John Law (p), Paul Rogers (b), Mark Sanders (d). Rec: 28 January & 27 May 1990.

LLOYD is joined here by the mighty Atlas for another excellent album. It's tougher overall than *Pentimento*, and somewhat less accommodating, being Deep End for most of its 57-minute length. Lloyd's strong and stringy

alto and his soprano, which seems to have gained a harder edge and makes much use of harmonics, slice through a collection of pieces credited to him and John Law, driven forward by the Rogers and Sanders power-block.

Law's two pieces bracket the album: "Cycling", one of the more accessible points of the programme, has him soloing with a strong flavour of mid-60s Herbie Hancock and Keith Jarrett, with Sanders obligingly doing a bit of Tony Williams cymbal splashing, but generally the piano is more thunderous and percussive. "Couple-ets" is a busy, turbulent piece, Lloyd's strident alto worrying at thematic fragments against Sanders' eruptive tattoos. At the end of Law's solo, full of jostling clusters of notes, the music moves into a more mainstream piano



and rhythm sequence before one of Rogers's determinedly two-handed solos.

"94" starts with Tracey-esque reed and piano voicings introducing scattering chases between Law and Lloyd. "90" is an edgily bright alto feature. "Motif" is in more abstract mode, and has Lloyd's increasingly assertive soprano drawn into powerful gushes of acidic sound by a vamp with a North African tinge. "92 & 93" open reflectively, an icy lyricism painting pre-dawn desert textures before the switch into agitated passages, with Rogers arco and Sanders using a range of alternative cymbal techniques until, after some quiet, shimmering piano the track comes full cycle to end with a crepuscular feel.

*Pentimento* was one of my favourite albums of 1988, and *Szyzygy* already looks set to be in

my list for 1991.

BARRY WITHERDEN

## CHET BAKER



### The Italian Sessions

Bluebird 83601 CD/LP/MC

*Well You Made It; These Foolish Things; Baruchas; Star Eyes; Somewhere Over The Rainbow; Post-Up House; Ballata In Forma Di Blues; Blues In The Cloud.*

Chet Baker (t), Bobby Jaspar (ss, f), René Thomas (g), Amadeo Tommasi (p), Benoît Quésin (b), Daniel Humair (d). Rec: 1962.

## CHET BAKER/ART PEPPER



### Playboys

Pacific Jazz 79 40742 CD

*For Minors Only; Minor-Years; Resonant Emotions; Tynes Tynes; Picture Of Health; For Males And Males; C T A.*

Baker (t); Pepper (as), Phil Urso (ss), Carl Perkins (p), Curtis Counce (b), Lawrence Marable (d). Rec: 31 October 1966.

PLAYBOYS is a far less inspiring Baker-Pepper pairing than *The Route*. The rhythm section, which re-united Perkins and Marable, who with Leroy Vinnegar had recorded the pianist's debut *Introducing Carl Perkins* earlier that same year, fatally fails to cohere. The weak link seems to be Counce, who is a wayward technician, with none of Vinnegar's exactness of response.

Nonetheless, it's an interesting highlight of two young stars at something like their zenith. Baker in particular plays with a disarming confidence, reading relatively unfamiliar charts (all but two of them by Jimmy Heath) with great aplomb. Perkins's reading skills were as notoriously faulty as his recording technique was bizarre and it's interesting to speculate how well rehearsed the band was before going into the studio.

Pepper's interplay with Urso on the opening "For Minors Only" gives the less well-known tenor man a valuable opportunity to show his paces. He is reminiscent in style of Richie Kamuca or J.R. Monterose, with a gritty directness of approach. Miles recorded "C T A" in 1963 with Jimmy Heath at his elbow and Gil Coggins on piano; the result





15 THE GLOBE CENTRE, WELLFIELD ROAD, ROATH, CARDIFF, WALES, UK  
TEL (0222) 472323 (24 HOURS) (0222) 473670. FAX (0222) 472324 (24 HOURS)



just no *click* Who is Eye? This "guest" vocalist's Damo Suzuki-like howls add a certain *click* Rejected by major *click* Such this, you hapless *click* Impression that Zorn is trying a tad too hard to be a blood brother with those disaffected rock zombies who created hardcore in the first place, while he was off doing weird shit with Chadbourne and all those *click* Sumptuous *click* Nice sweet person like Frisell doing *click* Excerpts from a teenage operatic nightmare, maybe, with added *click* Favourite title: probably the winsomely detailed "New Jersey Scum Swamp", unlocking *click* It's moving, it's alive, it's *click* In an MTV world, there's *click* Refreshing pin-sharp recording, a clear improvement over *Naked City's* looser *click* Always the same old *click* Hardly seems worth baiting 'jazz' fans or critics or whoever, since most who weren't bothered probably quit Zorn-watching back when *click* No, don't kill me, please, don't *click* Inside some noise-box of a *click* Just say nein *click* And then there's *click*.

MIKE FISH

## SIDSEL ENDRESEN



*So I Write*

ECM 1046 CD/LP

*So I Write, This Is The Moss, Dreamland, Words, Mirror Image, Spring, Truth, Horse In Rain.* Sidsel Endresen (v); Nils Petter Molvaer (t, fh, perc); Django Bates (p); Jon Christensen (perc). Rec: June 1990.

THERE ARE LOTS of probable reasons why — linguistics, cultural politics, the absence of an art-song tradition — but Norwegian music has always been richer in instrumental than in vocal exponents. Until recently.

Working somewhat obliquely outwards from a jazz/folk/improvised idiom, Karin Krog, Agnes Buen Garnas, the late Radka Toneff, and Terje Rypdal's sister Anna-Lise have begun to carve out new territory. There is no doubt that ECM's Rainbow Studio in Oslo has been the catalyst for much of this "new" lyricism and Sidsel Endresen's *So I Write* is probably the finest vocal set in the label's now extensive catalogue.

Endresen sings like a cross between Norma Winstone and, harrumph, Peter Skellern, a

husky alto with a deceptive range that pushes her up into lyric soprano register and down into contralto accents on the more sombre songs. Jon Balke's settings, to "So I Write", "This Is The Movie" and "Dreamland", suit perfectly her slightly prosy lyrics, but it's surprising to see Audum Kleive, alumnus of one of Terje Rypdal's less... subtle, shall we say? bands, contributing beautiful backings to "Spring Is Here" and "Words". Django Bates is credited with the remaining two, and I wish I could enthuse, but I'm not persuaded that he understands song-setting yet.

Whether singing exactly on the beat, or drawing out the words with no pretext of verse-metre, Endresen seems completely confident. There are no up-tempo tracks, but I've no doubt that she'd handle them every



bit as expertly. The group is superb, often minimal in register, but always effective. Christensen is, always, immaculate. Whether it is he or Molvaer (who is credited with percussion in addition to that aching brass tone) who contributes the "tabla" effects to "Words" is neither here nor there. It is a wonderful song, beautifully done. Molvaer plays with something of the authority we've got used to from his fellow-countryman Hilkan Hardenberger, a classical player with the same combination of full-hearted power and astonishing control (though in a classical repertoire). Bates's piano playing — no electronics, no horn, no extra percussion — is beautifully modulated, and quite in keeping with an accompanist's duty to point up the words without swamp-ing them.

Difficult to categorise and hard to evaluate relative to anything else on the go at the moment (I couldn't help think of Winstone's 1970s *Edge Of Time*, stripped of the big band), *So I Write* is a small gem.

BRIAN MORTON

## LEE MORGAN



*Indestructible Lee*

Affinity AFF 742 CD

13 tracks include: *Terrible "T", Off Spring, Exposé-dant, Triple Track, Last And Found.* Personnel includes: Clifford Jordan (ts); Wynton Kelly (p); Paul Chambers (b); Art Blakey (d). Rec: 13 October 1960.

## LEE MORGAN / HANK MOBLEY



*Hank's Show*

Savoy VG 455450121 CD/LP

*Hank's Show, Bat!, Balled Madly, Nostalgic, That's Blue, A-1, Doug's Minor B'O'K.* Lee Morgan (t); Hank Mobley (ts); Hank Jones (p); Doug Watkins (b); Art Taylor (d). Rec: 5 November 1956.

## DIZZY GILLESPIE



*Dee Gee Days*

Savoy VG 455450181 CD/LP

24 tracks include: *Lady Be Good, Berk's Works, Boppe's Blues, Canavan.* Personnel includes: J J Johnson (tb); John Coltrane (ts); Kenny Burrell (g); Milt Jackson (vib). Rec: 1951, 1952.

## FATS NAVARRO



*Fat Girl*

Savoy VG 455450115 CD/LP

12 tracks include: *Boppe's A Ruff, Fat Boy, Fracture, Maternity, Stealin' Trade, Spinal.* Personnel includes: Kenny Dorham (t); Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis (ts); Sonny Stitt (as); Bud Powell (p); Kenny Clarke (d). Rec: September, December 1946.

## HOWARD MCGHEE





# The Bebop Master

Atlantic AFF 765 CD

20 tracks include: *Get Happy*; *I'll Remember April*; *Daddy Blue*; *I Concentrate On You*; *Groovin' High*; *Cottage For Sale*.

Personnel includes: Bennie Green (tb); Sahib Shihab (as, bs); Pepper Adams (bs); Tommy Flanagan, Duke Jordan (p); Ron Carter, Percy Heath (b); Walter Bolden, Philly Joe Jones (d). Rec: 22 October 1955, 13 June 1960.

"Now *had* Fame's posterior trumpet blown." What Pope wrote in *The Dancin'* seems particularly ironic given the afterlife of the bebop hornmen. Miles and Dizzy went on to something like a gas, but the verdict of the dunces on some of their finest contemporaries has been little more than sour afflatus. These five repackagings are important not least in their exposure of some of the finest and most undervalued trumpet playing of the jazz era.

In 1946, Fats was not long out of Andy Kirk's band (where he shared a bench with Howard McGhee and Charlie Shavers), but already he had perfected the same beautiful shaping of a solo which Gillespie was doing five years later on the sets that make up *Due Get Days*. What distinguishes Fats is the sheer melodic virtuosity he was capable of, even when some of his fingerings don't seem altogether assured. Whatever the reason for that (and the suspicion must always remain that it was the same stuff that made McGhee sound increasingly brittle and frail), it doesn't completely mar "Fat Boy" and "Sealin' Trash".

Where Dizzy undoubtedly had the long head was in his rhythmic sense. Almost every piece on *Due Get Days* is an essay in timing. Some of the vocal timing is decidedly off, but Dizzy's route through "Lady Be Good" or "Bopside Blues" (two versions) is as near perfect as makes no difference. McGhee's is the most complete set of the bunch, an unashamedly subjective verdict offered in defiance of my own conviction that Fats was immeasurably the finer player. Working with the likes of Tommy Flanagan and Philly Joe suited Maggie's chops. "I'll Remember April", with Philly Joe, and Sahib Shihab on baritone, is a delight, as is the original "Dusty Blue".

Equally subjectively, I always found it hard to get to grips with Lee Morgan, who seemed to me to be a player who dined out too long on one snakey novelty. These con-

vince me different, though not enough in one instance to overcome my deep qualms about Hank Mobley. In 1960, Morgan was recording with Clifford Jordan and Art Blakey; Eddie Higgins shared (if that's the word) piano duties with the wonderful Wynton Kelly. The Mobley collaboration comes from four years earlier and is by no means as assured, though the saxophonist's trade-offs on the long ballad medley are something special. Best of all is Morgan's deep-breathing stuff on Fats' "Nostalgia". "I'm A Fool To Want You" on *Indestructible* demonstrates his ability to make Clifford Brown's characteristic vibrato an element in the rhythmic calculus, it's a device that reappears elsewhere and is extraordinarily effective.

A rum bunch in some respects, but at least one small personal road to Damascus came

(rs, ss), Antonio Pedone (bs); Pino Greco (gk); Ignazio Garsi (p); Seve Swallow (b); Paolo Mappa (d); Sergio Cammalleri (perc); Carla Bley (cond). Rec. 11-16 May 1989.

RECORDED in Palermo, there's some old favourites here, like "440" from *Maia Mammata*, "Blunt Object" from *Live!* or the delightful "Lone Arranger" - now with Italian dialogue - orchestrated by Jeff Friedman from the original arrangements for an instrumentation every bit as large as the BIG band. Indeed I'm sure the BIG band did play "Egyptian" in the Casino De Paris concert.

In the sense that the charts exist, both the Siciliana band and the outfits that Carla puts together for her tours make the structures of the music available from any group of highly competent orchestral players in almost classical fashion. But what this disc demonstrates very clearly is also the demands of identity and certainty that the music makes of any soloist to whom it offers opportunity.

Fairly predictably, the most glaring example here is Valente, who started off as reliable in the original Band but who has now grown into as awesome - and singular - a voice as Bill Harris used to be (and with the same trick of seizing your attention with the first note). Pino Greco, with his nervy guitar licks, and D'Ana, who's able almost perfectly to reproduce the style of late-50s Coltrane, also add dimensions. Yet Massimo Greco, good as he is, only reminds you about the breadth of expression Lew Soloff has developed since he was co-opted into Carla's musical framework: much wider than anything he achieved - or was offered - with Gil Evans.

The only real local difficulty, though, is that despite the best efforts of Seve Swallow, Mappa and Cammalleri don't quite get the band moving with the effortless energy that Victor Lewis and Don Alias got the BIG band going. Though on slow tracks, like the glorious "Dreams So Real", it hardly matters.

Carla herself only directs here, no doubt with the minimalist elegance she usually displays on these occasions. It's a manner that, I suspect, disguises the centrality of her presence to the performance of her music. To that extent it also masks her present status as the inheritor of a great tradition and almost the last great bandleader left in jazz.

JACK COOKE

## HOWARD MCGHEE

the bebop master



out of all the nonsense with the cueing button, so if you want a single, starter recommendation, blow some of your poll tax hold-back on *Indestructible* Lee.

BRIAN MORTON

## ORCHESTRA JAZZ SICILIANA



Plays The Music Of Carla Bley

XtraWATT14 CD

440; *The Lone Arranger*; *Dreams So Real*; *Baby Baby*; *Joyful Noise*; *Egyptian*; *Blunt Object*.

Nico Rina, Massimo Greco, Pietro Pedone, Fato Rina, Giovanni Gattila (t); Gary Valente, Salvatore Pizzo, Salvatore Pizzaro (b); Maurizio Persia (b-tb); Orazio Mangeri (ss); Claudio Monzibano (as, ss); Stefano D'Ana (ts); Alessandro Palacino



# FASTLICKS

\*\*\*

*Billy Koff meets Cecil Taylor and Derek Jarman in the garden of unsavory new releases.*

**CECIL TAYLOR SOLO: GARDEN 1/11 (Hat Art CD 605011).** Long considered Cecil Taylor's crowning solo achievement, this two-part CD issue proves the ten-year-old *Garden* to be a ravishing experience destined never to lose its lustre. Rapidly chiselled notes, seemingly falling in random patterns, cluster and form the scaffolding for the pianist's growing celestial plan. The speed and sharpness of his attack clears the space for the several silences that fix his dispersed themes in place, until the final notes are snatched from the recess of his astounding imagination to bind the scheme.

**GIANNI GEBBIA TRIO feat MASSIMO SIMONINI: OUTLAND (Splartb) CD H 315-2).** Startled by his own precocity, saxophonist Gebbia is compelled to slip banana skins under his lovely lyricism in the shape of guest Simonini's sample effects. But silliness carries its own zappy invention and their duets are more diverting than the straight jazz parts. Shame they couldn't hold off painting a Mona Lisa moustache on the plaintive beauty of "Verso Kamarina".

**TOGOO MACHOVER: FLORA (Bridge BCD 9020).** Various ohen hum, sweet hum, ho hum and humbug. Electronically-oriented compositions from NY's Egghead Republic, incubated under Carter, Sessions and Boulez's IRCAM. Technological innovations haven't significantly advanced Machover's approach to composition – unless you count the composer's flash computer data glove with which he controls electronic spillage on the raga-baroque of "Bug-Mudra". Otherwise, his modulations gently lift earthbound vocal and acoustic compositions onto a moderately more diverting plane.

**TERMINAL CHEESECAKE: ANGELS IN PIGTAILS (Parthological PATH 3CD); BOB**

**OSTERTAG: ATTENTION SPAN (ReRe Rel - Der 33).** Computer samplers are best deployed as garbage disposal units fed from the towering slagheaps of a wasteful culture industry. Terminal Cheesecake twin-input discarded rockpop and po-faced classics to produce the compact, acid-laced pellets of noise they pass on in agitated slurrings of rhythm through the nightmare British cultural body politic like barium (*God help us - Ed*). Stand back Ostertag! On paper, his disc sounds great. But he samples and solos from within a molecule of John Zorn music to little point.

**SIMON FISHER TURNER: THE GARDEN/OST (Mate IONIC 5CD9); BRUCE GILBERT: INSIDING (Mate CD STUMM 71).** Popular



music claims to be open to any innovation – sure, so long as it can be squared to the beat. Soundtracking is a rare way round the beat impasse. Turner piles into his excellent score for Jarman's *The Garden* all the music you'd otherwise need a beat visa-stamp to get onto record. The disc version shapes an alternative aural narrative from source sounds, ambient electronic flows and slashes of erotic guitar noise – the whole cut to an indiscernible but felt pulse. Gilbert's contemporary dance collaborations – here Ashley Page – are more abstract but no less enthralling. "Bloodlines" is a gravity-defying feat that sets huge noise-blocks tumbling gracefully through space.

**THOMAS KOENER: NUNATAK/GONGAMUR (Barroom BAR 002, dist Recommended); NACH-**

**TLUFT: TIME AND SPACE (Jazz & Now for 4EARS CD 103).** Two discs caught in the arclight of "Microphony" era Stockhausen. Koener's impressionistic transcription of the slow death of Scott's polar expedition is atmospherically drawn from studio manipulated gong decay times. Grim, grey and OK. Swiss percussion/electronics trio Nachtluft amuse Japanese audiences with the TV/SF voice samples bracketing re-run experiments in suspending and extending beats through time and space. Glum.

**DOMINIK VON SENGER: THE FIRST (VersaBr 20072); CONGLOMERATE: THE BIBLE SAYS (Impetus IMP CD 18921).** Locked grooves of the fusion con and the guards have thrown away the keys. Von Senger claims he's reaping the dividends of growing up in the creative environment of Can's Cologne. You can't tell from the shallow new age guitar and keyboard trajectories he springs from Rosko Gee's trampolining rhythm beds. Only once, veteran British improvisers Conglomerate on "Deferred Gratification Pt 11", stop the guards cold and snatch a glance through the open door. But, oddly for improvisers, freedom glimpsed seems to frighten them back into the fusion groove.

**STEPHAN WITTEK: WORLD OF STRINGS (Intakt CD 017); SVEN-ÅKE JOHANSSON/DIETMAR DIESNER: KONSUMDELIKATESWARE (Intakt CD 016); MARTIN SCHUETZ/HANS KOCH: APPROXIMATIONS (Intakt CD 018).** The Cook case for Fortress Europe behind whose walls the cause of jazz is both protected and advanced receives solid support from Intakt. Witteck's improv guitar disc is a twisting clatter of freedom thrash, tautly struck chords and nervy strings of notes anxious to find a place in the guitarist's ever-changing plans. East German reeds player Diesner and the emigre Swedish free drummer/accordionist Johansson eloquently resolve the tensions of such imbalanced instrumentation. The Swiss Schuetz-Koch duo call in the usual NY suspects – inc Corn, Burch Morris and Andrew Cyrille – to tax their invention. They are not found wanting. The song sliver "Yes You Are", composed with Shelley Hirsch, is the sweetest two minutes of this whole column.



*Call Paxman First*

116 Long Acre, London WC2E 9PA 01-240 5775

**WAVENDON  
COURSES**  
*music in the making*

**CALENDAR 1991**

- 1-7 April 1991 ALLMUSIC EASTER COURSE  
with JOHN DANKWORTH, SCOTT STROMAN and HILARY DAVAN WETTON  
Centred on the goal of developing the whole musician in every student.
- 18-19 May 1991 TUNED PERCUSSION WEEKEND  
with EVELYN GLENNE, NIGEL SHIPWAY AND FRIENDS  
Sponsored by Vincent Bach International.
- 28-30 June 1991 RHYTHM SECTION WEEKEND  
with JOHN MORLER, TREVOR TOMKINS, JEFF CLYNE AND PHIL LEE
- 11-24 August 1991 SUMMER JAZZ COURSES I AND II  
Course Directors: JEFF CLYNE AND TREVOR TOMKINS
- For further information please contact The Education Officer, The Stables,  
Wavendon, Milton Keynes MK17 8LT. Tel: 0908 582522.

"a revelation! my first real insight into jazz"

**JAZZ ACADEMY**

(Director: Michael Garrick)  
**THREE PARALLEL COURSES**

- 75 years of jazz discovery } for all instruments
  - Beginning to play jazz } including strings
  - Singers + accompanists
- Seven rewarding days of practice & theory, history and today's approaches. Fee: £165

AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC  
17th-24th August 1991

Details: The Administrator, Tel: (0908) 648945  
or from: Regent's College, Regent's Park, London NW1 4NS  
Tel: 071-487 7501 (office hours only)

**FREE EASTER JAZZ  
AT THE BARBICAN**

**Modern Jazz**

GOOD FRIDAY 29 MARCH 12 NOON - 4.00PM

Jason Rebello Group • Pinski Zoo  
Julian Joseph Quartet • EPJ

**Modern Jazz**

EASTER SATURDAY 30 MARCH 5.30 - 6.30PM

Alan Skidmore Quartet

**New Orleans**

EASTER SUNDAY 31 MARCH 12.30 - 6.30PM

Vintage Jazz Band with Jack Gilbert  
Crane River Jazz Band with Monty Sunshine  
Bill Brunskill's Jazzmen

**Mainstream**

EASTER MONDAY 1 APRIL 12.30 - 6.45PM

Humphrey Lyttelton and his band  
Kit Packham's One Jump Ahead  
Terry Smith Quartet • Vic Ash Quartet  
Laurie Chescoe's Good Time Jazz

FOOD AND DRINK AVAILABLE  
FOR FURTHER DETAILS TELEPHONE 071 638 4141 Ext 2.18/365

**Crazy Jazz**

5 Prospect Road, Chesham, Herts EN8 5QX  
MAIL ORDER CD'S AT CRAZY PRICES

**GARY BARTZ QUINTET**  
featuring C. Roditi, J. Hicks  
West 42nd Street

Recorded Live at Birdland NYC '91 \* 68 mins \*  
This and all Candid CDs only £9.50 (normal price £11.50)  
Offer valid until end April

Catalogue of over 4,500 CDs available - price £2.00.  
Phone 0992 25436 for details.

Access/Bardcard/Visa accepted. Cheques/PO's payable to Crazy Jazz.  
P&P 1 CD 60p, 2 CDs 90p, 3 CDs £1.20, 4 CDs £1.50, 50+ FREE.  
Overseas at cost Fax 1992 44944

**Cadence**

Jazz & Blues Magazine

Averaging over 100 record and book reviews each month plus interviews, oral histories, news and Blues.  
Also we stock over 700 different labels each month at prices up to 88% below list.

**\$2.50 Sample  
\$25 per year**

**AirMail Sample \$5  
\$30 (Outside USA)**

Cadence Magazine

Cadence Building, Redwood, NY 13679  
(315) 287-2882 FAX 315-287-2880





## OUTLINES

\*\*\*

### NEW MUSIC

*Richard Barrett scores the latest composition – from a yes-yes for Nono to a no-no for the new Factory classical.*

Is CONTEMPORARY composition difficult, or just difficult to boil down into an easily-packaged description? In the case of Luca Nono's late works I'd say probably both. The music flies in the face of the shrinking attention-span and universal disposability encouraged by late 20th century "culture", in an attempt to find a quiet and uneventful space in which to play out its sparse, poignantthrenodies. Each sound is as if distilled from a lament of symphonic proportions, not forcing the listener's attention but inviting the most single-minded concentration and involvement. This listener at least is repaid by a musical experience intense enough to convince that the barriers of "difficulty" are illusory. Three orchestral works including the half-hour *No hay caminos, hay que caminar* are on Astrée E8741: *Gustav Mahler's master and other music for soloists and live electronics* is on Edition RZ ED. RZ 1004, LP only.

While Nono's music of the 1980s could be seen as an ultimate extrapolation of the Western classical tradition, IANNNIS XENAKIS has consistently returned directly to the roots of that tradition in ancient Greek culture. *Oresteia* (Salabert Actuals SCD 8906) sets sections of Aeschylus's trilogy in a style full of brutal oppositions between rhythmic chanting reminiscent of the Orthodox liturgy and Xenakis's own swatches of glissandi. The dark and elemental side of Greek tragedy erupts into view in an authentically contemporary form, in many ways one of Xenakis's most approachable works for the new listener; the live recording underlines the compelling immediacy of this composer's best works.

Four more of which are given live by Amsterdam's phenomenal ASKO Ensemble on another of the essential Xenakis discs (Attacca Babel 9054-1). It opens with the world premiere of *Echange*, for bass clarinet and ensemble, whose unexpected lyricism (again barking back to archaic models) is

projected with impeccable confidence and technique by Harry Sparnau. Aki Takahashi negotiates the pianistic impossibilities of *Eonta* with no less flair, and the ensemble both here and in *Palimpsest* and *Waarg* (isn't that the name of a planet?) exude an enthusiasm and tightness I have seldom heard equalled.

SIMON BAINBRIDGE and ALEJANDRO VIÑAO (both born in the early 50s and currently working in Britain, though Viñao originally hails from Argentina) may be some way from Nono and Xenakis in achievement (so far!) as well as style, but both make auspicious CD debuts this month. Bainbridge conducts the BBC Symphony Orchestra in his *Fantasia For Double Orchestra* of 1984 (Continuum CCD 1020) whose strait-laced title does at least hint at a wealth of

whom technology is neither a fetish nor a prison, just the natural vehicle for his ideas.

Finally, Factory Classical's 1990 releases are as mixed a bag as last year's ranging from the fascinating through to the unspeakable. The mostly vocal group RAO BYNO in *Sang Of Love And Death* (FACD336) contrive to tarnish Monteverdi through the (barely competent) use of electric guitar and bass and studio effects, although the depths of their taste are reserved for the new works by John Paul Jones (yes, the Led Zep one) and one Harvey Brough, whose "Red Bird" is as embarrassingly twee a piece of ecostimentality as you're likely to hear.

ROLF HIND's piano recital (*Country Music*, FACD326) is quite a mixture in itself: although I'm prejudiced against such variousness in recordings (for every gem there's a pup), the theme of folk music variously dressed-up/imitated/atmosised does mean the pieces, by Grainger, Finnis, MacMillan, Janacek and Barok, are mutually illuminating in each other's company: and Hind is an exceptional pianist. His rendition of only two of the eight parts of Michael Finnis's *English Country-Tunes*, though brilliant, remains a tantalisingly partial view of the work's epic sweep between melancholy tranquillity (an idealised English folk-music) and the violent clashing of vast masses of sound. The only other recent piece, James MacMillan's *Piano Sonata*, though evincing just as much empathy with (in this case Scottish) traditional music, does so in a disappointingly conventional pianistic style: Finnis, like Bartok before him (and, perhaps more relevantly, like Cecil Taylor and Borah Bergman) is engaged in reconceiving the piano for his own musical needs.

GRAHAM FITKIN's *Flak* (FACD 346) is a collection of pieces for between one and four pianists, performed by the composer with Eleanor Alberga, Shelagh Sutherland and Erollyn Wallen. The exuberant ensemble pieces are reminiscent of Man Jumping in their interlocking layered repetitions, with some highly intricate jazz-inflected textures taxing the players' togetherness. The music isn't about mechanical precision, though, especially in the slow and reflective solo pieces whose frequently acidic harmonies and punsaking concern for structure dispel any tendencies towards the ambient. It's engaging, memorable and unpretentious music.



imaginative orchestral sound, even if its form is at times somewhat too obvious. I preferred his earlier *Viola Concerto*, also on the disc, a more individual and no less ambitious work and beautifully played by Walter Trampler.

Viñao, in *Son Estero* and *Triple Concerto* (Wergo WER 2019-50), confronts computer sounds with four voices and three instruments respectively. *Son Estero* especially (with its sampled Latin percussion among other imports) generates from the computer imaginary orchestras of enormous sophistication and a very human sense of gesture and timing. Viñao's fluency with the digital studio can lead to a somewhat too glibly cinematic approach, and is often at odds with his (intentionally) far less adventurous writing for live performers. It's still refreshing and rare, all the same, to hear a composer for

Evan Parker continued from page 33

and then it either ends on maximum complexity – which is a sort of wedge form; or it comes back . . . very often there are elements of *da capo*, back to the top. So there are rough analogues of normal theme and variations; there are formal qualities there. But again, it's not always a conscious plan. It's only in the course of playing that I know which form will be used. Or which form will be the most accurate way of describing what happened."

"It's playing with an absolutely minimal form, namely linearity. The piece starts at A and goes to B. It's not necessarily a straight line, but – a line. And that's a very natural thing for a monophonic instrument."

"The thing I always come back to is Paul Klee's description of drawing – taking a line for a walk. I think of solo saxophone as taking a note for a walk. And we'll see afterwards where we went rather than me leading you round a path I know well."

"Every time I start it's the same place and every time I start it's somewhere different. It depends on how you want to look at that place. The same as when you get up in the morning, it's a new day, but it's also got a hell of a lot in common with the day before. (*Laughs*) It's a question of how you want to incorporate the cyclic, repetitive elements into the Heraclitan flux, the river you can never step in twice. Both things are true

and both things are absolutely inadequate descriptions of reality."

"Even the small reality of the music itself . . . When you start to talk about the bigger reality of the music, the culture, the world, the cosmos, everything else, history, cosmology, the small story of the music in that context becomes a very strange little nothing."

"But maybe because it is nothing, and has no sense of real power, strangely enough it has a kind of . . . it seems to be able to allude to some bigger picture. But never in a way that could help anybody decide what to do when they get up tomorrow. (*Laughs*) Not really. Not even me. Unless it's to practice."

But perhaps it can help you decide to get up tomorrow? (*Laughs*)

"Ah! Yes. Perhaps."

#### discographical note

Many of Evan Parker's most important recordings, notably those on the Incus label, are currently unavailable. Second-hand copies are hard to find, but look out particularly for his solo releases: *Saxophone Solo*, *Monoceros*, *Six Of One and The Snake Divide*. Other excellent Incus Parkers include meetings with George Lewis (*From Saxophone & Trombone*, *Husk*, *Drift & Shaffell*), Derek Bailey (*Compatible*) and a one-off trio with Bailey and Anthony Braxton (*Company 2*). Recent, available and highly recommended releases include duos with Barry Guy (*Das Improvisation*, *Jazz & Now*), Steve Lacy (*Chorpy*, FMP) and Walter Prati (*Hall Of Mirrors*, MM&T); and trios with Barry Guy and Paul Lytton (*Atlanta*, Impetus), Alex von Schlippenbach and Paul Lorenz (*Elf Bagatellen*, FMP) and Cecil Taylor and Tristan Hornsinger (*The Harsh*, FMP).

#### Louis Moholo

Louis Moholo continued from page 37

when we were not playing together as the Blue Notes we were together in soul, and Chris was helping me out in many ways that I'm not really prepared to talk about, those are secret things, you know? We helped each other every way, just by being damned *alive*! It was enough. Now that they are gone . . . it's like I got the sack you know, sacked out of the band . . .

The Blue Notes did not split, we just stopped playing with each other for some time and went off to form our own bands, each of which was successful. The Blue Notes was the fountain. There was always a link. And now and then we would meet and play with each other, and that was unbelievable, man, unbelievable. Me and Dudu were going to do this gig for Chris, that would have been the gig of the century, *really*. But it wasn't supposed to be.

I thought Chris was the one who was going to live longer than anyone else. Because Chris was the one that was, like, health conscious. So much so that sometimes we would be pissed off with him. We would be making this interview in a hotel foyer with some big Italian guys, like the Italian BBC, and Chris would stream in there with a bag, just a see-through bag of onions, and some carrots and honey. We're sitting in this foyer drinking some champagne, and me and Dudu are just wanting to finish so we can have a beer, and Chris would

be just the opposite, he'd want the meeting closed so he can go and meditate upstairs. And we want to go and fuck ourselves up with beer!

So I really thought that Chris would live longest. Up to the point when Johnny died it was like roulette, Russian roulette, like, who's going to go first? It was terrible! And Dudu sometimes was very outspoken, he used to talk about it a lot – 'Who's next?' And me and Johnny would tell him to leave it out. It was horrible, just like Russian roulette . . .

But I thank the Lord for having put it together, for having shared a life with these guys, a very, very good foundation, a very good musical background. The Blue Notes was a school. From the start it was like we knew that this wasn't going to last very long, this band. But we were given some time, we had a long run, 32 years . . . And now there's nobody.

Sometimes, often when I'm in a nice place or nice company, I think that I shouldn't be here, and I start thinking, 'Oh *shit*, Johnny's not here to enjoy this'. Every time. I wish it'd go away from me, you know? Because I'm really pregnant with these guys. *Pregnant* with them, they're *in* me. It's a shame. And I knew them from boys too, when we were still young.

I dream about them a lot. The day before yesterday I was with Dudu, literally, in my dream. We were just relaxed. All of them, I've dreamt of all of them. It's nice, to feel like they're visiting me now and then, you know?





The following are still available (\* indicates that stocks are very low):

- \*1 Steve Lacy**, Eric Dolphy, Harold Land, Ron Blake, John Stevens, Max Roach.
- 12 Afro Jazz**, Laurie Anderson, Chris McGregor, Phil Minton & Roger Turner.
- 18 Sonny Rollins**, Tommy Chase, Jayne Cortez, Bobby McFerrin, Stanley Jordan, Bernard Taveras, Joe Farrell.
- 19 Ornette Coleman**, Charlie Haden, Steve Lacy, Slim Gaillard, Jazz Cartoons.
- 20 Art Blakey**, Hank Mobley, Gordon Tins, Bobby Watson, Wynton Marsalis, Branford Marsalis.
- 21 Chet Baker**, Presley Zou, Jamaaladeen Tacuma, Chucho Valdes & Arturo Sandoval, Phil Wachsmann, Michael Nymann, Nuah Ertog.
- 22 John Coltrane**, James Blood Ulmer, The Giant Stars, Rashad Blain, Nathan Davis.
- 23 Bill Laswell**, Lasse Thore, Celia Cruz, Anita O'Day, Allen Bash, Arts London.
- 24 Betty Carter**, Jimmy Smith, Paul Bley, John Abercrombie, Salome Bucher, Maggie Nicoli, Vienna Art Orchestra.
- \*25 Courtney Pine**, Paul Motian, George Coleman, Luciano Berni, Gerry Mulligan.
- \*30 Chico Freeman**, Alex von Schlippenbach, Eddie Harris.
- 32 Django Bates**, Davey Rudman, Tony Oxley, Dismundo Galea, Weather Report.
- 33 Sonny Rollins**, Dave Brubeck, The Beat, John Russell.
- 34/35 Lester Bowie**, Branford Marsalis, Dexter Gordon, Serge Chaloff, Lasse Thore, Paul Lytton & Paul Lewis, Frank Zappa.
- 36 Steve Williamson**, Phillip Best, Bill Fivell, Art Farmer, Tashmei Kouda.
- 37 Bobby McFerrin**, Hangtun Hannu, Dirty Deez Brat Band, John Larc.
- 38 Wynton Marsalis**, Wayne Shorter, Nigel Kennedy.
- 39 Andy Sheppard**, Gil Evans, Sheila Jordan, Todd Dameron.
- 40 Ornette Coleman**, Charlie Haden, Charlie Rouse, Robert Ashby.
- 41 Thelonious Monk**, Steve Coleman, Steve Saalbach, Kross, Tommy Smith.
- 42 Horace Silver**, Bad Shank, Xero Singing, Barney Wilen.
- 43 Pat Metheny**, Robert Johnson, Albert Collins, Charlie Mariano, Lucy Fingers.
- 44/47 Courtney Pine**, Cecil Taylor, Roland Kirk, Mike & Kate Westbrook, Bice Baderbeck, Bats Gonzalez.
- 48 Joe Henderson**, King Oliver, Warren Marsh, Herman Leonard, Harold Budd, Dave Liebman.
- \*49 Julius Hemphill**, Frank Morgan & Mike Store, Billy Jackson, Clark Tracy, Akemi Kuba.
- \*50 David Holland**, Tommy Smith, 50 Players, Italian Jazz.
- 51 Marilyn Crispell**, Andy Kirk, Roland Perrin, Gil Evans, Dances Richmond, Caspar Brüttnemann.
- 52 Sonny Rollins**, Ed Blackwell, Hank Roberts, Martin Archer, Ornette Coleman.
- 53 John Scofield**, Chet Baker, John McLaughlin, Johnny Hodge, Von Freeman, Elliott Sharp.
- 54 Jason Rebello**, Javay Roulis, Bob Stewart, Defekt, Adelaide Hall.
- 55 David Sanborn**, Booker Little, John Lewis, Lasse Thore, Lou Gare.
- 56 Composers**, Carla Bley, John Cage, Misha Mengelberg, Judith Wier, Mike Gibbs.
- 57 Bird**, Billy Bang, Devoni Gonzalez, Charles McPherson, Rod Robey.
- \*60 Andy Sheppard**, Jack Dylamont, Laurel Haupton, Odalen de la Motte.
- \*62 Paul Reid**, Henry Threadgill, Keribates Stockhausen, Jackie McLean, Sergey Koryukhin, Nina Mae McKinney.
- \*63 Duke Ellington**, Billy Strayhorn, Bambi Morris, Orphy Robinson, Harry Connick, Roy Eldridge.
- 65 Bill Frisell**, Anthony Braxton, Jimmy McGriff, Bobby Hutchett, John Harls.
- 68 Chet Baker**, Peter King, Coleman Hawkins, Bob Berg, Shoko Kame.
- 69 Courtney Pine & Iain Ballamy**, Willem Breuker, Benny Bailey, Dan Barrett.
- 70/71 29th Street Saxophone Quartet**, Cassandra Wilson, Martin Smit Smith, Lee Konitz, Michael Nymann, Bobby Bradford, John Rose Collective, Essential Albums (Of The 80s), British Jazz Supplement, Biggest ever issue!
- \*75 Roadside Picnic**, Margot & Joe



Lovato, Avenette Paruck, Peter Maxwell Davies, Michel Patrasneau, Andy Sheppard Big Band.

- 76 John Surman**, Jazz Warriors, Dexter Gordon, Shavkar, Kroyof Pederskov, Margot On Record - 2, Tommy Smith.
- 77 McCoy Tyner**, Mary Lou Williams, Kenny Barnes, Maxmatters, Chris McGregor, Carol Kidd.
- 78 Sun Ra**, Frank Sinatra, Jon Havill, Eugene Chadbourne, Vixxy Galus, Dodo Pakowano.

**79 Jimi Hendrix**, Don Cherry, Ray Anderson, Pat Warr Russell, Fred Wesley.

**80 Bebop**, Miles On Record - 1, Louis Sclavo, Scott Hamilton, Ess.

**81 Andy Summers**, Steve Coleman, Art Blakey, Miles On Record - 2, Joe Zawinul, Jason Rebello.

**\*82/83 Quincy Jones**, Cecil Taylor, Ralph Peterson, John Gibson, Miles On Record - 3, Stockhausen & Waltrou, Film Music, Records Of The Year.

All issues are £2.00 each except double issues - £2.70 for double UK post. Overseas: please remit £2.40 per copy (£3.20 for double issues).

Airmail delivery: £3.40 (£3.90 for double issues). Send to: Wire Back Issues, Units G&H, 115 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5PN.

## JUDGEMENT!

I WAS surprised at first by Ben Page's letter in issue 84 about your neglect of Blue Note. After all, the classic analysis of Wayne Shorter's *Blue Notes* (*Wire* 11) is one I've returned to repeatedly over the years.

So I settled down to a lunch time of *Unity*, *Along Came John*, *Grantland* and *Think* and reviewed the evidence. It has been thin in recent years: some perceptive reviews of the waves of reissues (but the undervaluing of Grant Green), the championing of Joe Henderson's *The State Of The Tenor* and a couple of pages here and there for the 50th anniversary.

What we need now is some coverage in depth of the lesser-known classics. I look forward to a record-by-record analysis of Andrew Hill.

MATTHEW NICHOLAS, Guildford

*What we need now is for Blue Note to reissue all those Andrew Hill classics, so there would be some point in our doing an exhaustive analysis - Ed.*

## ON HIS WICKES

WHILST GENERALLY in agreement with the thrust of Richard Cook's article on European jazz ("Take The E Train" - *Wire* 84), surely his remark that "After decades as second-hand synthesisers of American advances, European players suddenly seem aware of their own feet" is itself at least a couple of decades late?

Furthermore, it seems we owe the emancipation of British and European jazz from slavish pursuit of American trends to a broader range of players than the free-formers of the 60s. You mention Lars Gullin and Albert Mangelsdorff. One could add Marcell Solal; and, in this country, Joe Harriott, Michael Garrick, Tony Coe, Stan Tracey, Bobby Wellins, the Don Rendell-Ian Carr Quintet. Extending beyond *Wire*'s customary coverage, one could even go further back to the preceding decade, to Sandy Brown's idiosyncratic brand of mainstream, or John Dankworth's thirdstream experiments with Mártyás Seiber, distinct from those of Mingus or John Lewis.

As is shown by your mag's discerning reviews of recordings past, jazz is credible for



## THE WRITE PLACE

*The winner of our favourite letter wins a delicious bottle of Jim Beam whiskey. Send your brickbats to: Write Place, Wire, Units G&H, 115 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5PN.*

its durability rather than media-contrived image ephemeralities which most of its practitioners have justifiably treated with contempt. History shows maturation need not dampen continuing originality - think of Kenny Wheeler or Keith Tippett - and the cars still need the help of publicity to make a living! Neglect is what infuriates those ignored or misrepresented on your pages. So how about articles/interviews with the likes of Alan Skidmore, Art Themen, Henry Lowther, Mike Garrick? They have stories to tell...

JOHN WICKES, Bristol

## INCHOATE MY LUNCH

I'M TEMPTED to give you full marks for the New Year issue, but in allowing Brian Morton to describe Ornette as "inchoate" you lose a few points. In addition you fall into the same trap as the record company by getting the band members and the titles wrong.

To put the record straight, the band on the CD is the one that played London and some provincial dates in 1968 (I saw them at

Manchester Polytechnic). The line-up was Ornette and Denardo Coleman, Badal Rag (trabas), Al McDowell and Chris Walker (not Wilker!) (basses), Chris Rosenberg and Ken Wessel (guitars).

In addition, track titles should read as "Honeymooners", "Boutgeois Boogie", and "Healing The Feeling" - not as listed. It's worth pointing out that despite getting the band's names wrong they did manage to use the right photograph on the sleeve.

Brian's review seems to follow on from a spate of Ornette backslashing that's going on at the moment (where? - Ed). I think that in comparing the studio and live versions of "Song X" he fails to address a number of key issues. Firstly, there are two guitarists here and their instrumentation and methodologies are different from Pat Metheny's. Secondly, this is a *live* band, playing together on their first tour in this incarnation. Thirdly, and perhaps more importantly, Ornette has consistently employed a different approach in studio and live situations. Metheny applies his particular linear style, patterns developing through the melody, whereas Rosenberg and Wessel use more of a chord/riff approach. I don't find this music "inchoate", but best described as "transitional".

BOB OSBORNE, Manchester

## RAVE ON, JON DABNER

INTERESTING to read (*Hatwire*, issue 84) about Van Morrison's unsuccessful attempt to get into the new Jazz Cafe.

I remember how in 1968, in Belfast, he came over and asked to hear my Aylee/Coltrane/Shepp LPs, but he didn't get into those either.

Listening to his music since then, I've always wondered if he'll ever get into where he's trying to get into.

TOM MUIRHEAD, London NW1

*For making us laugh, you win this month's bottle of Jim Beam - Ed.*

## x-mas x-word

ANSWERS: Arm 9. In A Silence, 10. Hogg; 11. Eskine, 12. Repose, 13. West, 14. Solvation, 16. Roker; 18. Any; 19. Dyne, 21. New Yorker, 23. Burt; 24. Pearson, 25. Avian, 26. Solar, 27. One I Crave. Doves 1. Mike Zwerin, 2. Pasmak; 3. Limer, 4. Gene; 5. Star player, 6. Sheppard, 7. Carin, 8. Lyle, 16. Sean Kerner; 15. Neslinger, 17. Rooster, 20. American, 22. Wheel, 23. Bianco, 24. Push, 25. Amen

# SIDSEL ENDRESEN GROUP

So I write  
about the world  
and on the white paper  
I write the words  
So I write  
about the world  
and on the white paper  
I write the words

## Sidsel Endresen

Vocal

So I write  
about the world  
and on the white paper  
I write the words  
So I write  
about the world  
and on the white paper  
I write the words

## Nils Petter Molvaer

Trumpet, Fluegelhorn, Percussion

So I write  
about the world  
and on the white paper  
I write the words  
So I write  
about the world  
and on the white paper  
I write the words

## Django Bates

ECM

Piano

So I write  
about the world  
and on the white paper  
I write the words  
So I write  
about the world  
and on the white paper  
I write the words

## Jon Christensen

Percussion

March 14: Band On The Wall / Manchester

March 15: Zeffirelli's / Ambleside

March 17: Midlands Art Centre / Birmingham

March 19: Jazz Cafe / London

New 7 Discs: Sidsel Endresen / So I Write

ECM 1408/841.776 CD/19/19C

